

**DISCIPLE-MAKING THROUGH SMALL GROUPS
IN THE LOCAL CHURCH**

**A Professional Project
presented to
the Faculty of the
Claremont School of Theology**

**In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Ministry**

**by
Walter Cabbie Dilg, Jr.**

May 2000

© 2000

Walter Cabbie Dilg, Jr.

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

This professional project, completed by

Walter Cabbie Dilg, Jr.

*has been presented to and accepted by the Faculty of the
School of Theology at Claremont in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of*

DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

Faculty Committee

Jack Rager
Patricia Merdini

5/10/2000
Date

John B. Finner
Dean

ABSTRACT

Disciple-Making through Small Groups in the Local Church

by

Walter Cabbie Dilg, Jr.

Mainline Protestantism seems to be ailing. The litany of woes have been given voice repeatedly over the last decades in terms of the United Methodist Church: membership decline, aging edifices, financial constraints, and societal marginalization. Many of its older members wrestle with unresolved dissatisfactions in their church and faith, and younger people are finding unappealing the traditional experience of religion. Affecting spiritual growth and faithful discipleship in this context is most challenging, yet crucial to the rejuvenation of the church and the well-being of God's people.

The mission of the church is to raise up faithful disciples of Christ regardless of the texture of the times. It is argued that small groups are an effective means to do just that in our current context. Little research though has been done to explore that claim. This study seeks to help remedy that situation by examining the relationship of a variety of small groups in the local church to the spiritual growth and faith maturity of their participants. It proposes that those groups that employ a more holistic understanding of spirituality will facilitate a greater spiritual growth toward faith maturity than other groups. A study follows to explore this assertion.

Chapter 1 introduces the call to and the problem of disciple-making in the context of the United Methodist local church. Chapter 2 explores spirituality, spiritual growth, and faithful discipleship, using the theology of John Wesley and the theological insights of Frank Rogers, Jr. to illumine the way. In Chapter 3, the value of small groups for stimulating spiritual growth is explored. In Chapter 4, tools for measuring spiritual growth and faithful discipleship are

surveyed, and a rationale is presented for the instrument selected for this project. Chapter 5 presents the study of a set of small groups in a particular local church over a two-month time period. Participants' spiritual growth toward faith maturity is reported in relation to the type of small group in which they participated. Concluding remarks are made in Chapter 6 which encourage the use of small groups with a holistic approach to spirituality to aid parishioners in their growth toward faithful discipleship.

While the key to the United Methodist denomination's future does not lie solely in the small group movement, local churches that use small groups to nurture their parishioners' spirituality will move toward successfully fulfilling their purpose and goal of making faithful disciples.

PERSONAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

For their help with this project paper and degree program,

I wish to thank . . .

my wife Deborah and our children Stuart and Meredith
for their patience, mercy, and love,

my parents
for their encouragement from the start,

and the congregations at
Moorpark United Methodist Church
and
First United Methodist Church of Ventura
for their understanding and support.

PUBLICATION ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Books

Permission has been granted to use extended quotations from the following copyrighted works.

David W. Johnson and Frank P. Johnson, *Joining Together: Group Theory and Group Skills*. 5th ed. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1994. Used by permission.

David Lowes Watson, *Class Leaders: Recovering a Tradition*. Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 1991. Used by permission.

Robert Wuthnow, *"I Come Away Stronger:" How Small Groups are Shaping American Religion*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1994. Used by permission.

From *Sharing the Journey: Support Groups and America's New Quest for Community* by Robert Wuthnow. Copyright 1994 by Robert Wuthnow. Reprinted with permission of The Free Press, a Division of Simon & Schuster, Inc.

Graph

Permission has been granted to use the graph from the following copyrighted work.

Gary M. Keene, *Guidelines for Leading Your Congregation: Organizing the Work of Your Church*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1966. Used by permission.

Research Tool

Permission has been granted from H. Newton Malony to use and reproduce the Religious Status Inventory in this research project. Inquiries about the RSI are directed to: H. Newton Malony, 180 N. Oakland Avenue, Pasadena, CA 91101, Telephone: 818/584-5528, Fax: 818/584-9630, E-mail: malony@fuller.edu

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Figures	vii
Tables	viii
Chapters	
1. Introduction	1
2. Spirituality and Discipleship	13
Spirituality	14
Spiritual Growth	19
Faithful Discipleship	27
3. Small Groups	34
Humans as Group Creatures	34
Small Groups and the Early Church	37
Ecclesiola in Ecclesia	40
Modern Small Groups	57
Qualities and Characteristics of Small Groups	63
4. Measurement Tools of Spiritual Growth	69
Potential Measurement Instruments	71
The Religious Status Inventory	76
5. Study of Small Groups at First Church	90
Setting Up the Study	90
Conducting the Study	95
Tabulating the Study	105
Study Results	105
6. Conclusion	133

Appendix

A.	Support Materials for Chapters 138
B.	Research Data 159
	Bibliography 183

FIGURES

Figure	Page
1. Disciple-Making Process	10
2. Ranking of Small Groups per Mean Change Scores	121
3. First Questionnaire for Pretest RSI	139
4. Second Questionnaire for Post-test RSI, Page 1	140
5. Second Questionnaire for Post-test RSI, Page 2	141
6. Appendix to Second Questionnaire	142
7. Religious Status Inventory	143
8. RSI Computer Answer Sheet, Page 1	149
9. RSI Computer Answer Sheet, Page 2	150
10. Publicity Flier A	151
11. Publicity Flier B	152
12. Newsletter Articles: 1/28/98 and 2/11/98	153
13. Newsletter Articles: 2/25/98	154
14. Newsletter Articles: 3/11/98 and 3/25/98	155
15. Covenant of Discipleship for C.D. Group A	156
16. Covenant of Discipleship for C.D. Group B	157
17. Mean Change Scores per Participant Noting Group Membership	158

TABLES

Table	Page
1. Gender of Participants	106
2. Marital Status of Participants	106
3. Years Christian of Participants	107
4. Years Methodist of Participants	107
5. Years Members of First Church of Participants	108
6. Small Group Registration of Participants	109
7. Test Scores Compared to RSI Average Scores	115
8. Participants with Largest Test Score Changes	116
9. Common Factors and Dimensions of Large Change Scorers	118
10. Small Groups Mean Change Scores	119
11. Ranking Small Group Mean Change Scores	120
12. Common Factors and Dimensions with Changed Scores per Small Groups	123
13. RSI Summary Score Sheet	160
14. RSI Participant 1 Score Sheet	161
15. RSI Participant 2 Score Sheet	162
16. RSI Participant 3 Score Sheet	163
17. RSI Participant 4 Score Sheet	164
18. RSI Participant 5 Score Sheet	165
19. RSI Participant 6 Score Sheet	166
20. RSI Participant 7 Score Sheet	167
21. RSI Participant 8 Score Sheet	168
22. RSI Participant 9 Score Sheet	169

23.	RSI Participant 10 Score Sheet	170
24.	RSI Participant 11 Score Sheet	171
25.	RSI Participant 12 Score Sheet	172
26.	RSI Participant 13 Score Sheet	173
27.	RSI Participant 14 Score Sheet	174
28.	RSI Participant 15 Score Sheet	175
29.	RSI Participant 16 Score Sheet	176
30.	RSI Participant 17 Score Sheet	177
31.	RSI Participant 18 Score Sheet	178
32.	RSI Participant 19 Score Sheet	179
33.	RSI Participant 20 Score Sheet	180
34.	RSI Participant 21 Score Sheet	181
35.	RSI Participant 22 Score Sheet	182

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age” (Matt. 28:19-20).¹ With these words attributed to Jesus, the author of Matthew draws his Gospel to a close. As Jesus ends his earthly ministry, he gives his followers what has been termed the great commission “Go . . . and make disciples.” Throughout the centuries of Christendom, this commission has been a mantle of motivation for both the individual believer and the organized church.

Over those years though, this commission has been pursued with passion and done successfully but also at times with casualness and lackluster effort. Mainline churches today seem to be in a period of time characterized by the latter, with disciple-making a low priority and spiritual formation of individual believers haphazardly sought.

This paper seeks to address this problem at the local church level. Solving these larger denominational issues are for a different paper; this one intends to note the difficult denominational context but then shift attention from this complex situation and draw it to the local church member and the proposed remedy at the individual level of small-group-stimulated spiritual growth toward religious maturity and disciple-making. It suggests that a small group ministry, using concepts of holistic spirituality, will significantly stimulate spiritual growth and disciple-making at the local church, revitalizing peoples' spiritual lives while aiding their spiritual growth toward religious maturity. Since little research

¹ All of the author's biblical references are to the New Revised Standard Version.

has been published though that traces the connection between small groups and spiritual growth, this project attempts to examine this relationship and notice, in particular, the degree to which a small group grounded in a holistic concept of spirituality is more effective in stimulating this growth. While this paper's focus is on individual spiritual growth through small groups, it is hoped that there are implications for the larger parish context, namely, that in the aggregate of this growth, the spiritual complexion of the congregation would change for the better and the success of the denomination in following the Lord's commission would improve.

In today's mainline churches, the passion of the faithful seems to have been geared more toward self-actualization and personal aggrandizement rather than sacrificial servanthood. United Methodist clergy and professor David Lowes Watson speaks to this situation.

Not to mince words, Christian discipleship is presented by and large in our congregations today as an unqualified blessing. People are promised a heightened quality of life, a fulfillment of their gifts and graces, and participation in a supportive and loving community. Moreover, they are assured a spiritual relationship with a loving, parental God who is concerned for their personal welfare to a very marked degree. In short, they are offered a very good package of benefits indeed.²

A church full of consumers, shopping for their most cost-effective religious deal (the greatest program at the least personal expense) does not find itself with members highly committed to the cause of Christ, people motivated to transform self and society. Its organizing principal is belied by a shift toward institutional maintenance rather than spreading the Gospel and disciple-making. Indeed, it appears to become a congregation that is self-absorbed and self-serving, seemingly at odds with the Lord's commission, and set on a path of stagnation

² David Lowes Watson, *Class Leaders: Recovering a Tradition* (Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 1991), 2.

and decline, with members adrift and struggling to spiritually survive in a sea of personal hubris and institutional idolatry. Such is the current context of today's mainline churches.

The United Methodist church has been one of those churches caught in this navel-gazing quagmire of institutionalism. It has affected the vitality of the church. Denominational studies show a steady trend of decreasing membership and shrinking Sunday School participation over recent decades. Warren Hartman, of the General Board of Discipleship, reports that from 1960 through 1964, the average number of people attending United Methodist Church School across our nation was 4.2 million. By 1984, this figure was down to 2.1 million people.³ Church School enrollment crested in 1960 at 7.8 million students; by 1984, it had receded to 4.15 million.⁴ Church membership reached 11,054,634 in 1964, yet was reported to be 9,227,088 by 1985.⁵ Average worship attendance was 3,991,877 in 1969, but by 1985 had dropped to 3,549,347.⁶ These figures highlight trends presented statistically here, yet played-out in the real life of local United Methodist congregations, and these decreases represent the decisions of people to worship elsewhere, study elsewhere, and fellowship elsewhere, or perhaps nowhere. They are indicative of the results of "how church is done" these days in our denomination and how individuals have responded to it.

Our denomination hit its high water mark of membership surrounding the

³ Richard B. Wilke, *And Are We Yet Alive?: The Future of the United Methodist Church* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1986), 12.

⁴ Wilke, 14.

⁵ Wilke, 16.

⁶ William H. Willimon and Robert L. Wilson, *Rekindling the Flame: Strategies for a Vital United Methodism* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1987), 14.

1968 merger of the Methodist Church and the United Evangelical Brethren Church. These years were heady days for local church pastors. One pastor reported how he hardly had to work to bring people into the church. People just came to join, steadily, and in great numbers. He described his major effort in ministry was to keep up with the influx of new faces and the personal needs of the swelling fellowship.⁷ By the late 1970s, things had changed and what appeared to be an endlessly flowing membership stream had all but dried up. Evangelism by default had to give way to a concentrated effort of extending the church's invitation and welcome to the unchurched. Yet the denomination foundered upon this challenge, for it had raised a generation of clergy, who seemed to be untrained and uncomfortable with these exigencies. They had expected to inherit these burgeoning churches and were trained to meet the need for a "professional managerial clergy" in those churches, only to find themselves in charge of churches befuddled by institutional decline and in need of a more entrepreneurial style of leadership.

With helpful lay leaders, the clergy kept doing what they were trained to do, only to discover that churches continued to be the way they were, in decline. The truth of the now popular leadership saying looms large: if you want to continue to get what you are getting, continue to do what you are doing. Clearly something new needs to be added to the mix, something that will rejuvenate the larger church by invigorating individual members of the local church.

"Most pastors are not lazy; they are busy," writes United Methodist bishop Richard Wilke. He goes on to say:

But they are not busy making new disciples or busy helping the lay people learn how to make disciples. Ministers are hurrying about caring for the surviving fellowship. Some experts believe that the

⁷ John Black, Senior Pastor, North Glendale United Methodist Church, Glendale, California, in conversation with author, 1980.

typical pastor spends 97 percent of his or her parish time in nurture of members; that is, they are laboring in pastoral care, administration, reaching, and preaching to those who are already members of the church.⁸

A church that embraces the Lord's disciple-making commission needs to have a vision of ministry that embraces evangelism and spiritual formation as well as the needs of the fellowship. Wilke continues to stress his point that the recent emphasis in ministry is misplaced. "Pastors are busy trying to care for their members, the members are content to be looked after, and the world goes to hell on a bobsled."⁹

The consequences of these membership decreases have been profound to the denomination and the local church. William Willimon and Robert Wilson, both professors at Duke Divinity School, note a number of ramifications in their book entitled *Rekindling the Flame*. These include a change in the church's self-image leading to a morale problem among its clergy, a decrease in the influence of the church in the larger society, an increased emphasis on institutional maintenance and survival, and a decrease in denominational income.¹⁰ These observations ring true to many clergy's experiences in the pastorate. Since the 1980s clergy morale has been an ongoing topic at clergy gatherings and executive sessions of the annual conference in this area; the church's voice, once heard and heeded in community circles, is now marginalized, if not silenced, in those places; many local churches find themselves seeking creative ways to balance budgets and perpetuate themselves, disconnected from the ministerial emphases of their mission

⁸ Wilke, 31.

⁹ Wilke, 32.

¹⁰ Willimon and Wilson, 15-20.

statements.

Willimon and Wilson note “The early goal of the Methodists and EUBs to ‘spread scriptural holiness throughout the land’ has become a diffused, poorly defined mandate to be all things to all people. Who are we and what are we supposed to be doing as United Methodists?”¹¹ Answering their rhetorical question, they respond “The gospel is not simply a generalized call to be in the world, but a call to be there in the name of Christ. The gospel, rather than the needs of the world, defines the mission of the church.”¹² To further drive home their point, they write, “The Incarnation is about the invasion into human history of God in the form of Jesus of Nazareth, who came calling people to be his disciples in a new kingdom.”¹³ Willimon and Wilson remind the church of its true nature and real calling, to share the Gospel and help usher in God’s full reign, to make faithful disciples. It is in this reappropriation of past insights and imperatives that the church will find the direction for the future, and this would be particularly true when it is laced liberally with doses of the Methodist traditions of evangelical spirit and social gospel that focus on the spiritual formation and active discipleship of individual believers in that local setting.

“[T]here is reason to be optimistic about future possibilities for our church because the Wesleyan heritage, if we recover it in our church life and thought, makes United Methodists uniquely suited to the challenges of our time.”¹⁴ What are these qualities of Methodism that are so promising? What are these aspects of our Wesley heritage that Willimon and Wilson believe need to be

¹¹ Willimon and Wilson, 25.

¹² Willimon and Wilson, 25.

¹³ Willimon and Wilson, 26.

¹⁴ Willimon and Wilson, 42.

reasserted and reclaimed in our day for the rejuvenation of the denomination and the revitalization of the local churches and its members? The Duke professors highlight three key aspects: "1) The experience of the grace of God is the central fact of the gospel, 2) Christian formation is the central purpose of the church and the goal of the Christian life, 3) The Gospel demands to be preached and lived before all."¹⁵ Experiencing God's grace in such a fashion that it shapes a believer's life into the image of Christ and leads that believer to extend the life and image to others is foundational to the nature of the church and faithful discipleship. It's a matter of hearing the Gospel and responding to the great commission, inculcating and then extending God's grace, person to person and local congregation to community.

Wilke writes, "If we are to be faithful to the great commission, we will continue to feed the hungry, heal the sick, and clothe the naked. We will be calling new converts into our total work of conversion and compassion while we are making disciples."¹⁶ It is clear, the church needs to move from an absorption in the institutional crisis mentality of our denomination to correcting our missional focus and pursue more intentionally God's mission again as a group of local churches empowered by Christ.

Criticizing the "rhetoric of crisis" in which too many United Methodists are absorbed, Thomas Frank writes in his compelling book on United Methodist polity:

A church that talks constantly about its loss of members, tells nostalgic stories about how wonderful everything used to be, continually scolds its pastors and laity for not being more productive, and harangues people about finding a vision for the future is focusing on itself and its own compulsive needs. A church that announces the Good News of Jesus Christ, identifies

¹⁵ Willimon and Wilson, 42-44.

¹⁶ Wilke, 46.

with the poor, cares for the broken-hearted, welcomes the stranger, pours money and volunteers into places of crisis, acts for justice, and pleads for the beauty and integrity of God's good creation is being true to itself. And it is God who gives the increase when the church is thus faithful.¹⁷

Frank's words illumine the involved paradox. To help the institution, the church needs to stop hyper-focusing on the institution. Jesus's words about finding oneself through losing oneself are informative for the church. What is crucial is the response to the great commission through ministries of disciple-making at the local level. In the formation of faithful disciples, one believer at a time, is found the balm for ailing congregations and the larger denomination. It is a matter of perspective. It is a matter of focus and priority of local church ministries.

Getting the local church back on track with its mission is crucial. As ordained and lay church leaders gathered to address these concerns, General Conference legislation was passed to reassert the denomination's organizing principal as a help for the local church. It is given voice in *The 1996 Book of Discipline*. The following are some excerpts from The Discipline that powerfully, directly, and unequivocally state the church's mission of disciple-making and how it is to be played out at the local level. "The mission of the Church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ. Local churches provide the most significant arena through which disciple-making occurs."¹⁸ And then again, "the mission of the Church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ by proclaiming the good news of God's grace and thus seeking the fulfillment of God's reign and realm in the world. The fulfillment of God's reign and realm in the world is the vision

¹⁷ Thomas Edward Frank, *Polity, Practice, and the Mission of The United Methodist Church* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997), 23.

¹⁸ United Methodist Church (U.S.), *The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church* (Nashville: United Methodist Publishing House, 1996), 114.

Scripture holds before us.”¹⁹

How is this done? What are aspects of this disciple-making that the congregations are directed to undertake? Helpfully, The Discipline provides some directions on this disciple-making mission.

We make disciples as we:

- proclaim the gospel, seek, welcome and gather persons into the body of Christ;
- lead persons to commit their lives to God through Jesus Christ;
- nurture persons in Christian living through worship, baptism, communion, Bible and other studies, prayer, and other means of grace;
- send persons into the world to live lovingly and justly as servants of Christ by healing the sick, feeding the hungry, caring for the stranger, freeing the oppressed, and working to have social structures consistent with the gospel; and
- continue the mission of seeking, welcoming and gathering persons into the community of the body of Christ.²⁰

Denominational leaders and resource personnel have tried to translate this call to disciple-making into local church mission and programs. In the guideline booklets produced by the publishing house of the denomination, the graphic entitled Figure 1 visually enhances the meaning of these disciplinary instructions.²¹

As The Discipline calls us back to what is central to our faith and church, and as the Guideline provides us a helpful visualization of the process, it is crucial to remember the empowering role of the Spirit in this mix, for it is by God's grace that this process unfolds in the believer and in the congregation. If United Methodism is to be a rejuvenated denomination with a revitalized

¹⁹ *Book of Discipline*, 114.

²⁰ *Book of Discipline*, 115.

²¹ Gary M. Keene, *Guidelines for Leading Your Congregation: Organizing the Work of Your Church* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996), 3. Graphic used by permission.

people, it will be by reconnecting in more powerful and effective ways with the grace of God.

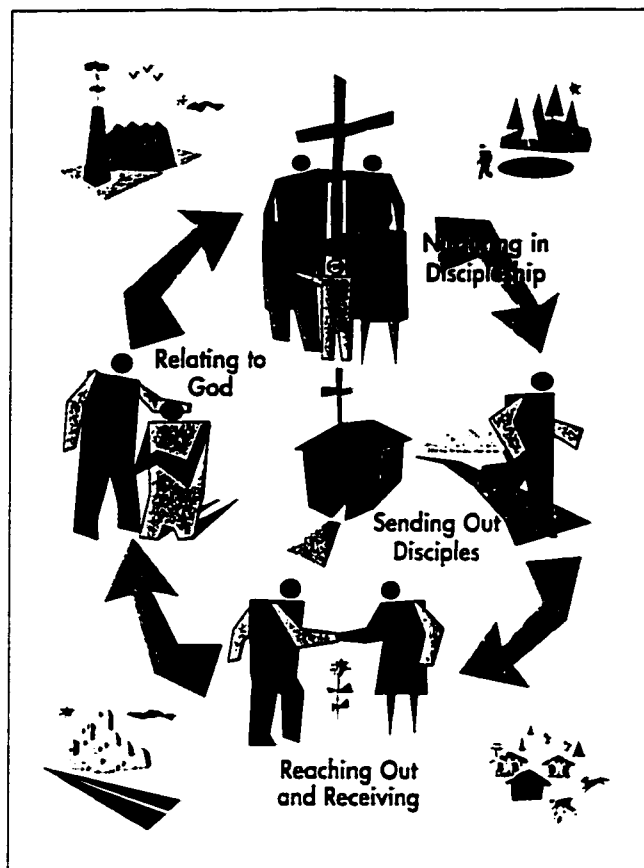


Figure 1

Disciple-Making Process

Seeking, centering upon, and experiencing God's grace is foundational for the spiritual health of the individual believer and for the general well-being of the larger congregation. The work of the church needs to be shaped so that this empowering encounter with God is frequent and significant. Frank Rogers,

associate professor of religious education at Claremont School of Theology writes about how the Spirit moves as it will, yet people can hope and work to be in its path and thereby benefit from its encounter. "Certainly, the church cannot manipulate the coming of the Spirit. Yet, it can seek to place itself in that Spirit's path, to step, in faith, in ways that correspond to the Spirit's movement in the hope and promise that the Spirit will lift the community up into this movement."²² This is what the church needs to do to revitalize itself; this is what believers need to do to be faithful disciples. Faithful disciples will rejuvenate local congregations. Small group ministries are helpful in this task.

As this project paper embraces this renewed vision of "doing church" by making faithful disciples through small group ministries, a better examination is needed of what is meant by spirituality, spiritual growth, and discipleship. Chapter 2 explores these terms focusing on the concept of grace as presented in the theology of John Wesley and as brightened by the teachings of Frank Rogers, Jr., professor at Claremont School of Theology. Roger's paradigm of the three-fold movement of the Spirit is helpful in enlivening Wesley's thought for the purposes of this study. Then in Chapter 3, the presence and use of small groups in the Christian movement will be examined. Particular focus is drawn upon small groups used for praying the office, lectio divina, guided imagery, covenant discipleship, and service activities. Small groups are discovered in this examination to be effective tools and techniques that have aided in this disciple-making and faith-maturing task of the local church throughout the centuries. This project suggests that small groups will stimulate spiritual growth toward religious maturity in contemporary mainline churches. Chapter 4

²² Frank Rogers, Jr., *Karl Barth's Faith Epistemology of the Spirit as a Critical and Constructive Framework for Christian Education*, Ph.D. diss., Princeton Theological Seminary, 1991 (Ann Arbor: UMI, 1991), 487.

discusses how this might be documented. The study assumes that there are objective measures of spirituality, particularly as it tends toward maturity in the Christian faith, yet it recognizes that this task of measurement is most difficult. A number of instruments available for measuring spiritual growth and religious maturity are presented. The instrument chosen for this study, the Religious Status Inventory, is introduced at length with its strengths and weaknesses exposed. In Chapter 5, the research project at a local United Methodist church is presented, which intends to show that small groups are very effective means for personal spiritual growth and the shaping of faithful disciples, especially those small groups that appeal to a holistic understanding of a person's spirituality. The results of the study modestly support this claim. Suggestions for additional research are voiced. Chapter 6 attempts to draw some conclusions from the study that might be helpful to other local churches and their desire to strengthen their ministries through small groups.

CHAPTER 2

SPIRITUALITY AND DISCIPLESHIP

God's grace is an amazing thing. It undergirds our lives from beginning to end. It imbues us with our basic nature and sets us on our journey of expressing and refining it. The Jesuit poet Gerard Manley Hopkins writes in his poem "Kingfishers":

As kingfishers catch fire, dragonflies draw flame;
 As tumbled over rim in roundy wells
 tones ring; like each tucked string tells, each hung bell's
 Bow swung finds tongue to fling out broad its name;
 Each mortal thing does one thing and the same:
 Deals out that being indoors each one dwells;
 Selves - goes itself; *myself* it speaks and spells;
 Crying *What I do is me: for that I came.*¹

Commenting on the poem, Richard J. Hauser notes "Every created being is endowed by God with an inner nature and acts accordingly - 'selves'; in this it glorifies its creator. And so with us human beings."²

The movement of life, rooted and nurtured by the graceful ground of being tends toward freedom, complexity, integration, and productivity through the passing of time. Each creature finds its place and moves toward its life end or goal, its telos. As Paul Tillich observes, "everything temporal has a 'teleological' relation to the eternal, but man alone is aware of it."³ For the human, this telos or goal is an intimate reconnection with the divine, a reconciliation that brings meaning to our lives and deep satisfaction to the living

¹ Gerard Manley Hopkins, in *A Hopkins Reader*, ed. John Pick (Garden City, N.Y.: Image Books, 1966), 67 (emphasis in original).

² Richard J. Hauser, "Each Mortal Thing Does One Thing and the Same -- Selves: An Approach to Christian Discernment," in *Handbook of Spirituality for Ministers*, ed. Robert J. Wicks (New York: Paulist Press, 1995), 207.

³ Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology: Three Volumes in One* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967), 3: 406.

of each day. It is the discovering of life's natural soundtrack, catching on to the beat and giving way to joyful dance. The dance of the redeemed spirit is the life of faith. It is spirituality channeled and directed toward the divine presence and will; it is spirituality given form in discipleship; it is the maturing of the soul under the influence of God. Though there may be many missteps in the dance of life or wrong turns on the homeward journey to God, those people who put themselves under the influence of the Spirit find themselves growing in a spiritually healthy and productive direction toward wholeness and faith maturity.

Spirituality

Arriving at a working definition of spirituality is foundational to this project paper. Kathleen Greider, associate professor of pastoral care and counseling at the Claremont School of Theology, teaches that spirituality is "referring to a person's and/or community's life in relationship to that which the person and/or community considers sacred."⁴ What at first appears to be too minimal of a definition is recognized as contributing breadth and inclusiveness to the concept of spirituality.

However spirituality is defined, surely it should be defined as a quality of the individual and the community, and as a phenomena that transcends culture. It is not exclusively an Eastern or Western phenomena, let alone one that is solely the property of a particular denomination or sectarian group. One recognizes in the Dalai Lama, Pope John Paul, Billy Graham, Timothy Leary, and Shirley McLain signs of what is commonly understood as spirituality. As well, spirituality is manifest in private moments of the individual and in corporate times in which the community gathers to express itself and explore that which is fundamental to and beyond itself. This is seen in masses, Grateful Dead

⁴ Comments by Professor Kathleen Greider, Interterm course, "Spirituality," Claremont School of Theology, Jan. 1993.

concerts, the Burning Man gatherings, and Latin American base communities.

As such, it should be recognized that there is spirituality in all the living faiths. Spirituality and spiritual formation would be important terms for priests and practitioners of Hinduism as well as New Age mysticism, lone mystics, and religious bodies. Frank Stanger suggests that spirituality has to do with values, what one holds paramount in life.

‘Being spiritual’ has to do with one’s sense of the sacred, the identification and affirmation of what one considers the supreme values in human existence. Spirituality is the personal illustration of one’s total commitment and loyalty to such supreme values. The quality of one’s sense of the sacred determines the nature of one’s spirituality.⁵

What is sacred becomes an important consideration while discussing spirituality. A transcendent quality would seem crucial to uplift spirituality beyond noble thoughts. As Susanne Johnson writes, “spirituality, as I have defined it, is our self-transcendent capacity to recognize and to respond to God’s creative and redemptive activity in all of creation.”⁶

Yet restricting the sacred to the realm of one’s own religious orientation will lead to a definition of spirituality that is parochial. An article by Robert J. Banks, a professor at Fuller Theological Seminary, can be used to underscore further this point as he is seen to define spirituality from a purely Christian point of view. “Spiritual formation refers to the work of the Holy Spirit who transforms us into the image of Christ through deepening our relationship with God and others in and through our daily lives.”⁷ In this passage, Professor Banks

⁵ Frank Bateman Stanger, *Spiritual Formation in the Local Church* (Grand Rapids: Francis & Taylor Press, 1989), 14.

⁶ Susanne Johnson, *Christian Spiritual Formation in the Church and Classroom* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1989), 43.

⁷ Robert J. Banks, “Spiritual Formation in Seminary,” *Catalyst* 19, no. 1 (Nov. 1992):1.

assumes the classical Trinitarian formulation and the “image of Christ” metaphor in his understanding of spiritual formation. By making this point about spirituality, he has excluded from the arena of spiritual experiences and formation, the deists, humanists, or those from non-Christian religions. Within the Christian circle, Professor Banks definition is very helpful, yet it is important to acknowledge that Trinitarian Christians are not the only people grounded to the spiritual reality of life, nor the only ones who have discovered practices that are life-transforming. Clearly, a more inclusive definition would serve the common human experience better.

Professor Greider’s definition allows for a broader application in this regard. It stresses the personal and the interpersonal dimensions of human life as the loci of spirituality; it understands the sacred as the focus of spirituality; it asserts that spirituality itself is the relational process of the one to the other. It provides room for what would be commonly understood as a religious understanding of spirituality, as well as the more secular understanding of it.

In his book on spirituality, Daniel Helminiak argues that spiritual development is really just human development taken from a particular point of view, namely religious.

The presupposition is that spiritual development is not one more focus of study added to a list of other such foci - like physical, emotional, intellectual, and more technically conceived cognitive, moral, ego, and faith development. Rather, spiritual development embraces the whole. Spiritual development is human development when the latter is conceived according to a particular set of concerns: integrity or wholeness, openness, self-responsibility, and authentic self-transcendence. So spiritual development is the ongoing integration that results in the self-responsible subject from openness to an intrinsic principle of authentic self-transcendence. This conception envisages the ever fuller integration of the human spiritual principle into the very structures of the personality until, in the ideal, the personality

becomes the adequate expression of the fully authentic subject.⁸

Helminiak makes important points in suggesting the intrinsic nature of spirituality, its developmental and dynamic quality, and its comprehensive influence upon the person.

Spirituality needs to be inclusive of all people and all manners of expression of the spiritual; it also needs to embrace all aspects of what it means to be a person. John Carmody, in *Holistic Spirituality*, speaks to the point as he defines spirituality. "A holistic spirituality is a religious outlook and regimen that recognizes the connections among a person's various interests, problems, and responsibilities."⁹ Carolyn Gratton adds "a spiritual life is lived in relation to a human person's whole life field,"¹⁰ and again, "soul and spirit are best understood in terms of a relation, a relatedness to all that is."¹¹

When defining spirituality, it is important to recognize the person as a whole and to understand that what is being referred to as spiritual is involving a complex creature with physical, intellectual, emotional, and relational qualities. These aspects of personhood are related to and influence each other. For example, the body affects the emotions just as the mind affects our relations, or that the emotions affects the mind just as our relations affect our body. All four of these aspects of the person are in constant interplay, each influencing the other, none completely independent from another.

These aspects are all interconnected in the person, for in reality they are

⁸ Daniel A. Helminiak, *Spiritual Development: An Interdisciplinary Study* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1987), 95-96.

⁹ John Carmody, *Holistic Spirituality* (New York: Paulist Press, 1983), 3.

¹⁰ Carolyn Gratton, *The Art of Spiritual Guidance: A Contemporary Approach to Growing in the Spirit* (New York: Crossroad Publishing, 1992), 20.

¹¹ Gratton, 14.

all theoretical constructs which help us to make sense of our human nature and experiences. Each aspect is a way of looking at the person, and each aspect observes a part of the reality of that person, but each aspect is not the whole of the person. No one of these aspects define the person fully, rather, it is in their connectiveness or interrelatedness that a full picture of the person emerges. Only partial knowledge comes from looking at a part of the whole. To gather knowledge of the whole of the person, an integrative model and more comprehensive look at the person needs to be pursued. A helpful definition of spirituality must take into account this human complexity. A holistic model of spirituality moves in this direction. As a holistic understanding of personhood is foundational to an adequate definition of the human, an adequate definition of spirituality must be equally holistic.

In reviewing the literature on spirituality, Lawrence LaPierre has concluded that spirituality is multidimensional. He reports his review by enumerating six dimensions of spirituality: (1) journey -- the search for purpose, direction, or meaning in life; (2) transcendence -- the experience of the bigger than ourselves quality of life; (3) community -- a connectedness to one another and the world; (4) religion -- the expression of one's beliefs about the divine; (5) mystery of creation -- the encountering of God in our environment; and (6) transformation -- a dynamic process that leads to change in the person.¹² LaPierre's observations encourage consideration of how spirituality is expressed as a way to help define it. He sees it involving not only our sense of self, purpose, and place in the world, but also how we give expression and act upon these.

¹² These points are highlights from Lawrence L. LaPierre, "A Model for Describing Spirituality (Six Factors of Spiritual Experience)," *Journal of Religion and Health* 33, no.2 (Summer 1994): 153-61.

For the purposes of this project, spirituality is defined as that human quality which integrates the self, relates people one to the other, and connects them to God. This simple definition attempts to reflect the insights presented above. Yet, as spirituality is actually examined, it is found in particular life experiences of people, in particular cultural or religious contexts. It is in its particularity, its specific expression in a person's life, that spirituality is actually available to observation. It is in these particular manifestations that spirituality expresses its reality and takes on the qualities that associate it with certain religions and cultures.

For this study, attention will be limited to the individual and corporate realm of Christian spirituality, which would denote an understanding of spirituality given shape and meaning through the Christian world view and its theological concepts.

Spiritual Growth

"The 'telos' of man as an individual is determined by the decisions he makes in existence on the basis of the potentialities given to him by destiny. He can waste his potentialities, though not completely, and he can fulfill them, though not totally."¹³ What people do with our implicit spiritual connection to the Divine is crucial to the unfolding of our lives and the condition of our society.

Despite the common assumption that the spiritual life is spontaneous, its development is enhanced by a conscious effort, sometimes called 'formation.' . . . It should be noted that spiritual growth is not wholly a human endeavor. It starts with an openness to the guidance of God's Holy Spirit. . . . Spiritual growth is both a quest and a pilgrimage in company with others.¹⁴

The theological perspectives of Methodism's patriarch John Wesley and

¹³ Tillich, 3: 406.

¹⁴ Iris V. Culley, *Education for Spiritual Growth* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1984), 5.

Christian educator Frank Rogers, Jr. help present an understanding of Christian spirituality, spiritual growth, and discipleship. Wesley preached and wrote extensively on grace, a theological construct foundational to the understanding of the relationship between God and persons. As an expression of the Spirit, grace is understood also as basic to Roger's paradigm of the Spirit's movement among us. Roger's insights into the Spirit's movements help to breathe new life into Wesley's concepts of grace, animating them for a new age to appreciate. Wesley and Rogers are turned to for a theological foundation for this study.

"Christian spirituality, according to Rogers, is being in relationship with God, responding to the gracious initiative already in the world, wanting to be with that God ever more fully, participating in the three-fold rhythm of God." So writes Lyn Juckniess, a doctoral student of Rogers at the Claremont School of Theology in 1995. Unpacking Roger's theological insights from his seminars, she observes this about the professor's thoughts on the movement of the Spirit in a person's life.

Being spiritually attuned, a Christian finds oneself ever more fully participating in the three-fold rhythm of God. Being spiritually attuned, a Christian finds oneself with eyes opened, either gradually or suddenly awakened into the ground of God's grace by a the work of the Holy Spirit. Holistically, that is with body, emotions, mind, and volition, a Christian lives in the spirit.¹⁵

John Wesley understood life in the Spirit as well. He wrote of a life undergirded ever and always by God's grace. The way to faith, discipleship, and salvation was the way of grace. Wesley recognized the fundamental nature of grace in human life and its importance to the doctrinal conceptualization of the faith. There were three major categories or understandings of grace in Wesley's theological thinking. As he came to comprehend the initiative of God

¹⁵ Lyn Juckniess, "Spiritual Growth through Guided Autobiography Groups in Beginning Experience Team Members" (D.Min. project, Claremont School of Theology, 1996), 9-10.

in human life and our experience and response to God, Wesley wrote of prevenient grace, justifying grace, and sanctifying grace.

Even prior to coming to faith, a person's life is undergirded by God's grace. Christ's atoning act has taken place and people are in a redeemed relationship with God. It remains for us to recognize this, act upon this awareness, and allow it to renew our lives. God's grace through Christ has placed a new floor beneath our feet for the dance of life. The music of the cosmos plays, and in the deep recesses of our being we sense an awakening of a part of ourselves long dormant but not dead. Our soul yawns and stretches to the implicit beat of the cosmos, to the dawning awareness of God's being, to the dance of life rooted in God's life giving grace.

Prevenient grace is that grace of God that goes before awareness, readies us, beckons us toward faith. It is the music of the dance heard down the street, outside the hall. It is the smell of the dinner that draws the hungry from other parts of the house to the kitchen table. It is a promise of affection that leads the hurting and lost person into the loving embrace of God. We come with caution but we come, expectant of something new but unable to say for sure what it will be, knowing that we will never be the same once we respond to God. Prevenient grace draws us forward toward change and new life.

In a recapitulation of Roger's theology, Juckniess writes: "The first movement of the Spirit, beholding the face of God, is being soaked in God's presence."¹⁶ Rogers speaks of this being a "downward movement" or the reaching out of the Spirit to embrace the awareness or consciousness of humanity. As God's face is seen as shining upon people, as people become aware of God's beckoning to love, people sense their distance from God, their

¹⁶ Juckniess, 10.

alienation from the ground of their being. For some people, this awareness plummets them into deeper despair. In their existential angst, they sense themselves teetering at the edge of a yawning abyss. They fixate on the chasm between themselves as presently wounded and the distant image of themselves as divinely healed. They fail to notice the bridge that spans it. For other people though, this awareness stimulates a need for a more immediate and connected relationship with the divine. They open themselves up to the Spirit and receive the rejuvenating touch of God in their lives. The abyss recedes; the chasm narrows; the "sickness unto death" is healed. The experience of justification is theirs, and in joy and thankfulness they seek a deeper and ongoing relationship with God through this grace.

As people come to faith, we find this God-connection taking on personal meaning and having personal qualities. We find ourselves, in Wesleyan terms, open to the divine because of this prevenient grace. That foundational grace which went before now beckons us to an awareness of God and an acceptance of God's place in our life. We start to sort out the implication of these thoughts and feelings, and discover that in the moving into this new life there is a moving away from the prior life: a turning, a letting go and grabbing hold, a repentance and transformation. "Justification is another word for pardon. It is the forgiveness of all our sins and, what is necessarily implied therein, our acceptance with God."¹⁷

Justifying grace is that grace of God that leads people through repentance to faith, that resets souls and makes them whole, that gives new birth through water and the spirit, that reconciles and reconnects people to God.

Taking the word in a more particular sense, faith is a divine evidence and conviction not only that "God was in Christ,

¹⁷ A quote by John Wesley from his sermon, "The Scriptural Way to Salvation" in *John Wesley*, ed. Albert C. Outler (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), 277.

reconciling the world unto himself" (2 Cor.5:19), but also that "Christ loved me and gave himself for me." It is by this faith (whether we term it the "essence," or rather a "property" thereof) that we "receive" Christ, that we receive him in all his offices as our Prophet, Priest and King.¹⁸

People become disciples of Christ, as their spirituality finds expression through their Christian faith.

Having heard the music, we burst into the dance hall and take to the floor. Having followed the scent to the kitchen, we sit down and, offering thanks, we feast. Having been drawn to the touch of caring, we settle into the embrace allowing the loving balm to heal our soul. We dance, we eat, we touch, yet in many people a lingering anxiety persists because they sense they are unworthy of such caring and joy. They worry that someone will discover they are interlopers, not really invited nor welcome. Their souls are troubled by their disbelief that such mercy could be theirs, that such a gift would be freely given. "A leap of faith" is required in accepting God's grace. Those people who take it find themselves experiencing a "peace that passeth all understanding."

"The second movement of the Spirit, living in the glory of God," Juckniess writes as she continues in her presentation of Roger's theology, "entails receiving God's delight in one's triumphs, successes, and joys and participating fully in life with God as the agent of empowerment."¹⁹ As Rogers envisioned the first movement of the Spirit in a "downward" direction, he sees the second as an "upward" movement. The Spirit which has extended itself out from the divine to the human, having captivated the human, now draws the person back toward itself. Empowered by the Spirit, the person rejoices in who God is and how God is and, expressing that joy, moves toward greater appropriation of it.

¹⁸ Wesley, "Scriptural Way," sermon in Outler, 277.

¹⁹ Juckniess, 11.

This is the appreciation of the soul for God's justifying grace, and its movement toward sanctification as a response to that grace.

Having been justified, having been reconciled and reconnected with the Divine, we find ourselves led to make more of this experience of grace and God than a one time thing. We wonder how life in the Spirit might be in future days and years; we seek to continue in the place of joy, sustenance, and love. We do what we can to continue on and discover that such is God's will for all of us, always. We wonder about the music to which we dance. Does it play forever? Are there proper dance routines that help us experience and move better with the music? We finish the first meal at the table and wonder to ourselves about future meals. Will more be served at a later time? Are there other courses, different menus? We enjoy the embrace and wonder about the future of our new relationship. Will the hugs continue? Will the support be there in times of trauma and hardship, ill feeling and confusion?

God's sanctifying grace edifies and leads, inspires and guides, chides and corrects people as they move forward in life and seek to take within them more and more of God. Wesley understood this sanctifying grace as that which leads people in their lives of discipleship toward greater holiness. It is the process of spiritual growth, a dynamic and developing process that leads people toward wholeness.

Yet, it is not an easy path to walk. Often people stumble along the way; get disoriented and in their confusion take steps backward; become fearful and freeze; find the disciplines of faith too rigorous and simply stop trying to grow. The journey of faith is reported widely by pilgrims to be best described as a mixture of joy and sorrow, intimacy and distance, assurance and doubt, with both juxtaposed qualities having the potential to affect a person's spiritual

growth in a positive way.

Wesley used the phrase “going on to perfection” as descriptive of what the believer was to be doing and what God was asking. Wesley recognized that their response to God’s initiative was to engage in the activities of faithfulness, to work out our salvation with fear and trembling.

From the time of our being “born again,” the gradual work of sanctification takes place. We are enabled “by the Spirit” to “mortify the deeds of the body” (Rom.8:11,13), of our evil nature, and as we are more and more dead to sin, we are more and more alive to God. We go on from grace to grace, while we are careful to “abstain from all appearance of evil” (1 Thes. 5:22) and are “zealous of good works (Tit.2:14) as we have opportunity, doing good to all men” while we walk in all his ordinances blameless, therein worshiping him in spirit and in truth (cf. Jn. 4:23), while we take up our cross (cf. Mt. 16:24) and deny ourselves every pleasure that does not lead us to God.²⁰

Rogers speaks of vocation as a term for the organizing focus of this time of grace. “The third movement of the Spirit, carrying out the reign of God, is being propelled by the power of the Spirit’s gifts inside oneself to offer God’s grace to others.”²¹ As the believer moves forward in the faith, experiencing the sanctifying grace of God’s leading toward deeper faith, a push is experienced to express the faith in ways of consequence and coherence in life. In a sense it is accurate to say the person’s job of life, the person’s vocation, becomes one of bearing fruit of the Spirit, in and through life. This is another way of coming to the term of faithful discipleship. Rogers characterizes this as an outward movement, extending the believer’s faith into the world, engaging the believer in God’s unfolding will for the reshaping of creation in the fullness of God’s time as the reign of God.

²⁰ Wesley, “Scriptural Way,” sermon in Outler, 275.

²¹ Juckniess, 12.

Wesley would refer to this as “going on to perfection” and the effort of the believer to appropriate the Spirit to such an extent that the believer is headed for entire sanctification.

It is thus that we wait for entire sanctification, for a full salvation from all our sins - from pride, self-will, anger, unbelief - or as the apostle expresses it, “go on unto perfection” (Heb. 6:1). But what is perfection? The word has various senses: here it means perfect love. It is love excluding sin, love filling the heart, taking up the whole capacity of the soul. It is love “rejoicing evermore, praying without ceasing, in everything giving thanks” (cf. 1 Thess. 5:16-18).²²

In his essay entitled “Thoughts on Christian Perfection”, Wesley writes: “Q. 1. What is Christian Perfection? A. The loving God with all our heart, mind, soul and strength. This implies that no wrong temper, none contrary to love, remains in the soul and that all the thoughts, words and actions are governed by pure love.”²³

Going on to perfection and seeking sanctification are ways to express the direction of the believer toward greater faith and faithfulness. These Wesleyan words connote the spiritual maturing of the believer and the striving of the believer for a greater or deeper level of Christian discipleship. It is a taking on and being reformed by the “mind of Christ,” inculcating and being more fully transformed into the “image of God,” and living in the Spirit so that the reign of God is expressed in the person’s thoughts, words, and deeds. Wesley’s words establish how this is a dynamic process, a process of change and growth for the person, a process that requires an intentionality to participate and a surrender of self to the Spirit’s transforming influence.

The spiritual movement here can be characterized and understood in a

²² Wesley, “Scriptural Way,” sermon in Outler, 275.

²³ Wesley, “Thoughts on Christian Perfection,” essay in Outler, 284.

number of ways. It is the pathway walked from alienation, through repentance, to new life. It is the dawning awareness of God and God's place in a person's life, giving way to a recognition of occasional encounters with the Divine that prod growth, leading to a time of atonement and oneness with God -- the appropriation of prevenient, redemptive, and sanctifying grace. Simply said, it is the movement from disbelief to growth in faith as a disciple of Christ. This movement of the spirit, characterized by Rogers as downward, upward, and outward, repeats itself again and often as the believer moves further and further along in the life of discipleship and attains new levels of spiritual maturity. It is likened to the baton movement of an orchestra director. It waves down - up - and over, repeatedly, giving direction to and expression of the unfolding music of the group. So, too, does this concept of the human dance with the Spirit, give direction and expression to the soul's maturing movement.

Faithful Discipleship

This dynamic and on-going process of spiritual growth toward faithful discipleship is a moving forward in the dance toward greater love and intimacy with God, greater wholeness in life.

The new relationship with God, initiated and maintained by justifying grace, brought with it a sanctifying grace which renewed the will inwardly and which led to a transformed life outwardly. The real and relative changes in the believer were interdependent as well as distinct. The changed relationship of justification *necessarily* led to good works, because of the accompanying transformation of sanctifying grace. It was a dynamic necessity, in that a relationship with a living God could not, by definition, be static.²⁴

Watson highlights for us how Wesley understood faith as dynamic and changing as it moved on to perfection and that it by necessity was expressive

²⁴ David Lowes Watson, *The Early Methodist Class Meeting: Its Origin and Significance* (Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 1985), 62 (emphasis in original).

and lived-out in the actions of the believer. Through faith, people put themselves under the influence of the Spirit, find themselves in a process of renewal, and seek avenues to express and further experience this newness.

The gift of faith is God's gracious initiative. We merely decide to accept it, or to reject it. On the other hand, the gift of faith in Christ, important though it is, does not make us Christian disciples. It merely makes us *ready* to be Christ's disciples. To actualize our discipleship, to make it real, we must take our first steps, just like Simon, Andrew, James, and John. Discipleship requires more than a change of heart. It requires a change in our lives. It requires us not only to know Jesus Christ, but to walk with him. It requires us not only to hear his words, but to *act on them*.²⁵

Moving forward toward spiritual maturity or a developed discipleship in Christ are not automatic processes ushered in by the passing of time, nor are they simply a reception of a gift from God. They are the results of a process in which the believer and the Spirit work in partnership, yet a process that the believer can willfully turn from and impede. Regrettably, many people have done just that.

History is sadly laden with the sorrowful stories of people who chose the path away from God and toward social destruction, personal disintegration, and spiritual dissipation. Not that partnership with God and spiritual growth is an easy matter, for surely healthy relationships and successful community are a tremendous challenge even for the best intended and earnestly intentioned, yet willingly working in partnership with God is crucial for positive human growth. Personal morality and social ethics remain a moving target for many, hard to focus on and harder to hit. Alienation from God and human hubris, with its manifestation in a plethora of sins, result in many counter-productive efforts that inhibit rather than ease persons' spiritual growth. As such, the phrase "working

²⁵ Watson, *Class Leaders*, 10 (emphasis in original).

out your salvation" has meaning, and the freedom of human will finds its expression. The person decides or wills to further the process or inhibit the growth. Faithful discipleship is an intentional process of spiritual growth.

To accept this identity (as a Christian) means a very intentional way of life; which is why "disciple" and "discipline" come from the same Latin word, *discipulus*. This is best translated today as a "special student," someone who has undertaken to study with a particular teacher in great depth, and who therefore has arranged his or her life to make such study possible. Christian disciples must expect to order their priorities in the same way, and arrange their lives so that they are "disciplined" in following the teachings of Jesus.²⁶

Discipleship is much more than belief, it is praxis.

[D]iscipleship is formed, not as a mind set, but as a lifestyle; . . . the love of Christ is not professed in words alone, but in deeds; . . . faith becomes not merely a spiritual communion with God, but a walk with Christ in the world; . . . the anointing of the Holy Spirit is in order to take good news to the poor, sight to the blind, release to captives, and freedom to the oppressed (Luke 4:18).²⁷

As the faith is lived, belief is manifested in action. The more it is expressed and practiced, the more the faith will be perfected and the soul matured. "[I]f Christian discipleship is a life of discipline, as the word implies, then those who practice the discipline more regularly and more faithfully are going to become more mature as Christians; and that's that."²⁸ Movement in the direction of faithful discipleship will bear fruit. The maturing spirit will be manifest in acts of mercy and piety by the believer. It will not be enough, nor is it ever enough, to just say "Lord, Lord!" Rather, the lived expression of belief is

²⁶ David Lowes Watson, *Forming Christian Disciples: The Role of Covenant Discipleship and Class Leaders in the Congregation* (Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 1991), 6 (emphasis in original).

²⁷ Watson, *Class Leaders*, 79.

²⁸ Watson, *Class Leaders*, 119.

expected for the faithful disciple.

As consideration is given to what pastors would notice as indicative of a maturing spirituality and a developing or advancing discipleship, some interrelated criteria come to mind. An awareness of and connection to God must be foremost. It is hard to picture a person considered spiritual, who did not have this sense, and a person who sensed a close relationship with God would most likely be seen as further along in this regard. The quality of this relationship would be another dimension. If the relationship was one of heavy judgment and destructive of the person's sense of self and well-being, it would seem to be properly and negatively juxtaposed to the relationship which expressed grace and mercy and was experienced as healing and uplifting of the person. The latter one would seem to be more expressive of a maturing spirituality and deepening sense of discipleship. If the person felt this relationship was exclusively theirs and not to be shared or further experienced in the corporate arena, most clergy would question that understanding; yet if the person saw this experience of grace as a gift to be shared and enjoy in community with others, there would be a sense of greater spiritual maturity about the person.

In addition, people who are seeking to grow in the knowledge of the faith are often times seen as more mature spiritually, as are the people who engage in altruistic good works for the benefit of others in need. People who have made the connection between faith and works, so their faith gives direction to and shapes their behavior ethically, are often times perceived as spiritually mature. Typically, an increased level of financial stewardship will be indicative of a maturing spirituality and deepening discipleship, as would an increased level of responsible activity with the community of faith or church. And finally,

such a person would undoubtedly have a lived commitment to the life of God's creation, as it is expressed in self-care and care of others and as it is manifested in the ecological care of the environment.

Spiritual maturity and faithful discipleship are terms that are hard to define, yet statements of a "more so" or "less so" nature about maturity seem justified and defensible. This is because we have a paradigm in scripture's presentation of Jesus as the Christ that informs our perspectives on growing in the Spirit and living faithfully. We have the testimonies of the "cloud of witnesses" from the history of the church who over the centuries have revealed the contours of the spiritual journey and qualities of a discipleship of faith. Both of these illumine the issue of spiritual maturity.

Out of the Methodist tradition, Willimon and Wilson observe:

Confident that they had experienced a reality greater than that of the world, these Methodists sought to embody and to inculcate the Spirit of Christ, to make people who, in their daily living, resembled Christ. Wesley knew enough about human nature and the nature of the gospel to know that no individual alone can sustain this hope, can embody the Christian life-style. Therefore, he created a structure of corporate life, which enabled the Methodists to produce the sort of disciples they believed the gospel deserved. In salvation, God takes the initiative in reaching out to us in Jesus Christ. But we must respond through a concrete, communal embodiment of our response to God's initiative. Wesley, as well as Asbury, Otterbein, and Albright, really believed that Christians are "called to be saints," called to "perfection"—that is, maturity of thought and faithfulness of life-style. In other words, Wesley was convinced that the church is in the business of producing Christian character.²⁹

What would this Christian character look like? How did these early Methodists, or contemporary Methodists for that matter, get a handle on expressing it?

²⁹ Willimon and Wilson, 41-42.

Wesley's *General Rules* are still a reliable set of guidelines for Christian discipleship. They not only place complementary emphasis on works of mercy and works of piety - - the two dimensions of the Christian life that must always be kept in tension - - but they also provide a healthy correlation between public and private disciplines - - the social and the personal.³⁰

Wesley crafted what is termed his *General Rules* for this specific purpose of giving concrete direction to growing the spirit and developing faithful disciples. Determining the integrity of one's faith was impossible, for how does one read the inner affirmations of the soul? Tracing the authentic practices or expressions of a person's faith though was another matter. While there was still plenty of room for hypocrisy and simple misunderstanding, outward behavior was much easier to observe and audit than inward attitude. Wesley's *General Rules* helped guide the aspiring believer along the pathway of spiritual formation and faith development.

Referring to Wesley's *General Rules*, Watson writes:

Wesley never ceased to affirm these "outward rules" as the disciplinary framework within which the spiritual growth of the early Methodists was effected, and without which it was inevitably impeded. . . . These were at once a manifestation of faith, and a condition of continuing in it. The Rules accordingly stipulated three criteria. First, members were enjoined to do no harm, and to avoid "evil in every kind." Second, they were to do good "of every possible sort, and as far as possible, to all Men." Third, they were to attend upon "all the Ordinances of God: Such are The publick Worship of God; the Ministry of the Word, either read or expounded; The supper of the Lord; Private Prayer; Searching the Scriptures; and Fasting, or Abstinence." Wesley regarded this third criterion, the attending on the ordinances of God, as availing oneself of the "instituted means of grace," the disciplines, the practices of the church, without which any attempt to pursue a Christian discipleship was fallacious.³¹

³⁰ David Lowes Watson, *Covenant Discipleship: Christian Formation through Mutual Accountability* (Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 1991), 77.

³¹ Watson, *Early Methodist Class Meeting*, 108.

Wesley was trying to strike a balance between works of mercy and acts of piety, recognizing that both affected the believer. In a private way and in a public way, both were avenues of developing a solid grounding for faithful discipleship, both were means for spiritual growth and maturing in the faith.

[W]orks of mercy in their personal and social forms can be translated today into “acts of compassion” and “acts of justice,” both of which are necessary in the Christian life. By the same token, works of piety can be translated into public “acts of worship” and private “acts of devotion.” Again, both are necessary in the Christian life. Held together in a healthy tension, these can be formulated as a new “General Rule of Discipleship” for the church today: To witness to Jesus Christ in the world, and to follow his teachings through acts of compassion, justice, worship, and devotion, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.³²

This modern version of the General Rules stands as a benchmark for appraising spiritual growth and faithful discipleship. As an examination of the small group movement is now undertaken, it is anticipated that in small group participation people have discovered a means to help facilitate these developments in their spirituality.

³² Watson, *Covenant Discipleship*, 77-78.

CHAPTER 3

SMALL GROUPS

Humans are small-group beings.
We always have been and we always will be.¹

Humans as Group Creatures

Asserting how fundamental group life is to our species, David and Frank Johnson begin their comprehensive textbook on group theory and group skills with this imaginative illustration.

In 12,896 B.C. a small group of hunters surrounds a band of reindeer as the hunters ford an icy river. The hunters are armed with harpoons tipped with spearheads carved from reindeer antler. As the reindeer wallow in the water the hunters run in and slaughter them. It is the coordinated action of the group of Cro-Magnon hunters that makes them more successful than their Neanderthal cousins, who hunt as individuals.²

We are “who we are” and we are “how we are” because of our inherent social nature. It would seem that we were created this way.

Throughout human history, people have associated themselves in groups. From our earliest times as hunters and gatherers, through centuries of agrarian life, people have lived in groups. Groups are basic to humans. We are nurtured in groups at the hospital and day care facility; we learn in groups at schools; we work in groups at the office or construction site; we play in groups at the parks; we fight in groups at the battle lines; we govern in groups at city hall; we worship in groups at churches and synagogues. For moral and immoral purposes, ethical and unethical goals, people gather and function in groups. “The ubiquitousness of groups and the inevitability of being in them make

¹ David W. Johnson and Frank P. Johnson, *Joining Together: Group Theory and Group Skills*, 5th ed. (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1994), 5.

² Johnson and Johnson, 4.

groups one of the most important factors in our lives.”³ Indeed, the Johnson brothers claim that if observers from outer space conducted a study of earthlings, group membership would be seen as the dominant characteristic.⁴

Garth Icenogle, a leader in small group theory and process from a religious point of view, writes:

the small group is a generic norm of human community . . . birthed out of the very nature and purpose of God's being. God as Being exists in community. Human as the imaged beings of God were created in community and are called to live and mature in community. The natural and simple demonstration of God's communal image for humanity is the gathering of a small group.⁵

As a basic reality of human nature, our proclivity toward small groups reveal something about ourselves and about our creator God. It is interesting to note how this group connection expresses theology, manifesting the nature of God and people.

Icenogle asserts that the ever-present drive in human life for group connection is more than the social need of people for community, but rather reflects an innate drive that is “God-created (ontological) and God-directed (teleological)” for group life.⁶ It is basic to our nature as a created being and finds natural expression in the conduct of our lives. It is “both a demand of creation and a need of human culture,”⁷ says Icenogle, “that is transcultural,

³ Johnson and Johnson, 5.

⁴ Johnson and Johnson, 6.

⁵ Garth Weldon Icenogle, *Biblical Foundations for Small Group Ministry: An Integrational Approach* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1994), 13.

⁶ Icenogle, 13.

⁷ Icenogle, 10.

transgenerational and even transcendent.”⁸ Such an understanding explains the preeminent role small groups play in the human life, wherever and whenever an observer casts a studious eye.

Modern authors have raised the problem of community in Western society during our recent centuries. One thinks of Albert Camus and Jean Paul Satre, John Steinbeck and William Faulkner, Eugene O'Neill and Samuel Beckett to mention just a few leading literary thinkers who have explored our “social disintegration.” While sociologist Robert Nesbit calls “the problem of community the single most impressive fact in twentieth-century Western society,” Thomas Kirkpatrick recognizes that this sense of anomie actually is a modern phenomena.

For most of our human history, group life was a given. But we have less and less reason to be together and fewer and fewer ways of knowing each other, while our need for intimate, interpersonal relationships remain constant. Community scholars concur in describing contemporary society as alienated, rootless, lonely, and lacking a sense of belonging. While belonging, not escape, is the current imperative moral value, people have a war within themselves between aloneness and community.⁹

Kirkpatrick would suggest then that the small group movement is a direct response to post modern changes in our social fabric.

While recognizing the difficulties of modern Western life, Icenogle argues differently. He writes:

While many say this interest in and need for small group process is a part of a “paradigm shift” of human culture, Christians can look into our faith roots and discover small groups are not new. Small groups are reflective of the very nature of God and humanity. . . . In this shifting period we are returning to our human and faith

⁸ Icenogle, 13.

⁹ Thomas G. Kirkpatrick, *Small Groups in the Church: A Handbook for Creating Community* ([Bethesda, Md.]: Alban Institute, 1995), 10-11.

origins in search of community.¹⁰

With this assertion about the fundamental importance of community as foundational to human life, the small-group movement in the faith is examined.

Small Groups and the Early Church

When looking at Jesus and his disciples, a small group is seen. It is an interesting small group, in that it was a group of diverse and seemingly discordant people. There were Galilean fishermen together with a tax collector and a political zealot. There were prayerful and reflective members and members who were more oriented to action and impulsiveness. Yet this band of disciples lived, studied, worked, debated, and argued with one another, and ultimately they held together under the great challenges and distresses of that time.

Jesus and his disciples are a good example of a successful small group. They also illustrate how small-group life is not always pleasant or agreeable. While there are times of joy, when everything is going well and all the members are working well together, and there are times of difficulty, when the group seems to be falling apart and members are at odds with one another. This is part of the basic nature of groups. Successful groups learn how to maneuver this rocky terrain created by a variety of personalities brought together in a group, and discover how to remain in supportive community. Unsuccessful groups break apart from the stress.

The disciples grew, emotionally and spiritually, under the guidance of their small group leader and facilitator, Jesus. For awhile, the group seemed to disintegrate following his arrest and death, yet after the resurrection, the group rediscovered its identity and reconnected itself. More so, after the Pentecost

¹⁰ Icenogle, 10.

experience, the group members discovered their larger calling to evangelize and create other small groups after the manner and method of their risen Lord. The small group members became radically changed people and were empowered for their future through their small group association. They recognized that the spirit of their Lord would be with them, whenever and wherever they gathered in small groups in his name. As they gathered, divided, and gathered again in new and more small groups, this assertion was found true and the power of their movement grew and broadened.

Garth Icenogle believes much can be learned about small group leadership and membership by looking at the experiences of Jesus and his disciples. He writes,

Surveying the many experiences of the Twelve, ten key values stand out as intrinsic to Christian discipleship and small group leader development: (1) the centrality of Jesus in the group, (2) the heterogeneous culture of the group, (3) the invitation of the group to ministry and mission, (4) the sharing of life together in the group, (5) the group as community for others, (6) the group as counter model to the structures and systems of the religious and political world, (7) the group as invitation for men and women to live life together, (8) the group as new and eternal family, (9) the group as new model for human empowerment, and (10) the group as failed and restored community.¹¹

These qualities that Icenogle discerns from Jesus' original small group are fundamental characteristics of successful religious small groups throughout history as well.

The early church movement was a small group movement. Wayne Meeks writes in *The First Urban Christians*, "Pauline congregations belong to the category studied extensively by modern sociologists, especially American

¹¹ Icenogle, 203.

sociologists, and called 'small groups' or simply 'groups.'"¹² Small groups are seen in Corinth, Ephesus with Aquila and Priscilla, Colossae with Nympha, and even at Rome in Caesar's household.¹³ As the Jesus movement spread, more people were exposed to the Gospel and drawn into relationship with other believers. This next generation of believers gathered in small groups in people's homes. The basic cell of the Christian movement was the house church or "*kat' oikon ekklesia*." It pulled together the larger extended household "including not only immediate relatives but also slaves, freedmen, hired workers, and sometimes tenants and partners in trade or craft."¹⁴

As Meeks has researched these early housechurches and the epistles that were circulated among them as letters of advice, consolation, and edification, he has noticed that many of the qualities modern sociologists assert are crucial to small group development were present then. Meeks observes that "the letters also reveal that those groups enjoyed an unusual degree of intimacy, high levels of interaction among members, and a very strong sense of internal cohesion and of distinction both from outsiders and from 'the world.'"¹⁵

Robert Wuthnow, a leading sociologist of religion and professor at Princeton University, observes:

Spirituality went hand in hand with group life for historic, theological, and practical reasons. The historic reason was that personal piety had been expressed in this way for as long as anyone could remember. Even the earliest Christians met in groups, forming churches in their homes and subjecting their

¹² Wayne A. Meeks, *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 74.

¹³ John L. Casteel, "Introduction: The Rise of Personal Groups," in *Spiritual Renewal Through Personal Groups*, ed. John L. Casteel (New York: Association Press, 1957), 20-21.

¹⁴ Meeks, 75-76.

¹⁵ Meeks, 74.

interests in spirituality to the authority of their fellow believers. The theological reason was that Christianity encouraged believers to come together and form bonds of love and fellowship like those taught by their Lord. The practical reason was that believers found they needed one another for support. Without the affirmation of others, their faith was weakened.¹⁶

Small groups nurtured the spirituality that undergirded the Christian movement from the start.

Ecclesiola in Ecclesia

As the Christian movement grew, it took on a size and breadth beyond the scope of the small group. An example of this can be seen in the ramifications of the conversion of Constantine. With the legalization of Christian belief for the Roman empire, thousands took the plunge into faith, creating a church more readily identified with a nation or mass movement than a series of local small groups. Yet the small group nature of the faith continued as basic to the movement.

The phrase *ecclesiola in ecclesia* is helpful here. It means the little church within the larger church. Church historian Frederick Norwood remarks that "this meant the nurture of small informal groups within the structure of the state church. Although formal membership remained in the official structure, spiritual fellowship was found in the small group, the 'little churches,' within the great church (the established institution)."¹⁷ The *ecclesiola* is the form the small group movement took with the successful spread of Christianity through the middle ages and later.

One need not look far to recognize small groups underlying and

¹⁶ Robert Wuthnow, *Sharing the Journey: Support Groups and America's New Quest for Community* (New York: Free Press, 1994), 32.

¹⁷ Frederick A. Norwood, *The Story of American Methodism: A History of United Methodists and Their Relations* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1974), 116.

anchoring the development of the larger church. The gatherings of the desert fathers and mothers with their followers, the monasteries and early academies of the faith, the individual priests and their parishioners all organized themselves in a fashion similar to Jesus and his disciples, all discovered the value of small groups for themselves in strengthening their personal faith as they found themselves a part of a larger religious movement.

Much of what would be considered small group activity in this period of the church's growth involved believers practicing the disciplines of the faith. Disciples would gather together in small groups for worship, prayer, Bible study, and service activities. Believers sought to develop their faith in group settings, as well as individually. A number of these small group practices continue to this day.

Praying the Office

What we now call Praying the Office has its roots in the Jewish tradition of public liturgical prayer at fixed hours of the day, the most important being the beginning and end of the day.¹⁸ Liturgical scholar A. M. Roguet writes, "The testimony of the early Church shows that individual faithful also devoted themselves to prayer at certain hours. In various areas the practice soon gained ground of devoting special times to prayer in common."¹⁹

This pattern of the early Church became more codified and organized as decades and centuries passed. The *Didache* gives us the "first explicit,

¹⁸ Robert Taft, *The Liturgy of the Hours in East and West: The Origins of the Divine Office and Its Meaning for Today* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1986), 11.

¹⁹ A. M. Roguet, *The Liturgy of the Hours: The General Instructions on the Liturgy of the Hours*, trans. Peter Coughlan and Peter Purdue (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1971), 17.

unambiguous reference to a system of daily prayer in the primitive Church."²⁰

By the third century, short manuals appear "known as Church Orders, which provide directions and suggested forms of prayer for the liturgical assemblies of the Church."²¹ The *Apostolic Tradition* of St. Hippolytus of Rome, composed around 200 C.E. is an example. Church historian Eusebius comments at the end of the third century about the joyous practice of morning and evening worship.²² The *Rule of the Master* and the later *Rule of St. Benedict* both show the practice of the Hours with liturgical support.²³ During the fourth through sixth centuries practices diverged in observing the hours between more contemplative prayer gatherings of the "monastic type" and more celebratory ceremonial gatherings of the "cathedral type."²⁴ These two styles can be seen running parallel throughout the centuries, surviving into our modern times fairly unaltered.

Praying the Hours, comments Roguet, is a time honored way "to sanctify the day and all human activity."²⁵ Gabriel O'Donnell writes, "the Prayer of the Hours consecrates time, not by changing it and making it other than it is, but by admitting it to be what it is already -- God's time, God's reign, and in the light of

²⁰ Taft, 13.

²¹ Massey Hamilton Shepherd, Jr., *The Oxford American Prayer Book Commentary* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1950), xii.

²² Taft, 33.

²³ Taft, 122.

²⁴ Taft, 73.

²⁵ Roguet, 21.

the coming Christ, the time of salvation.”²⁶ This turning to God at specific times during the day and most often at the rising and setting of the sun, is a way people remind themselves of whose they are and how they should view each moment of life. As such, the Hours is a sanctifying of life and a method of growing in the faith. In his comprehensive book on the Hours and the origin of this Divine Office, Robert Taft writes,

So liturgy is simply a celebration of the Christian life -- or the “spiritual life,” if you will -- and the same is true of the Liturgy of the Hours. It is no more, no less than a common celebration of what we are, or rather of what we have become and are ever becoming in Christ. And we do it in common because all Christian life is a shared life, a group life.²⁷

Praying the Office or the Hours is a time honored liturgical practice, a method of worship, that over the centuries has been pursued by individual believers in the private practice of faith or by groups of believers observing the responsibility of the church to give corporate leadership to the sanctifying of the day. Either way, manuals and prayer books, such as the *Breviary* or *The Book of Common Prayer* continue to be put to use by individuals and groups. The *United Methodist Hymnal*, for example, provides an order for both morning and evening prayer and praise, as a guide and help for those members who would want to use this type of worship to nurture their faith.

Lectio Divina

While Bible study most certainly has to be understood as a discipline of faith practiced from the earliest of times, a particular type of Bible study called lectio divina oftentimes referred to more as prayer, took root solidly in the sixth

²⁶ Gabriel O'Donner, “Praying the Office: Time Stolen for God,” in *Spiritual Traditions for the Contemporary Church*, eds. Robin Maas and Gabriel O'Donnell (Nashville: Abingdon, 1990), 290.

²⁷ Taft, 347.

century through the Benedictines. Though Thelma Hall claims that “lectio’s origins were to be found in the beginnings of monasticism,”²⁸ Norvene Vest notes that “lectio divina has been generally known as the Benedictine approach to scripture because it characterizes the *Rule of St. Benedict*.”²⁹ In fact, Benedictine scholar Columba Stewart has discovered that lectio was seen as so crucial to the community of St. Benedict that “Benedict expected his monks to spend up to three hours a day in lectio.”³⁰

There are a variety of definitions of lectio that highlight a focus on scripture and an attending to the Spirit’s presence, both for the purpose of illumining and nurturing the participant. Vest writes, “lectio is a way of deep prayer, of encounter with God,”³¹ and again, “lectio is primarily a process of encounter, it is about surrender to Truth.”³² While Thelma Hall asserts that lectio “is not a ‘method’ of prayer,”³³ she does appreciate its prayerfulness when she observes that “lectio . . . is a holistic way of prayer which disposes, opens, and ‘in-forms’ us for the gift of contemplation God waits to give, by leading us to a meeting place with him in our deepest center, his life-giving dwelling place.”³⁴ Joan Chittister’s concise remarks that lectio is “reflective reading of the sacred

²⁸ Thelma Hall, *Too Deep for Words: Rediscovering Lectio Divina, with 500 Scripture Texts for Prayer* (New York: Paulist Press, 1988), 9.

²⁹ Norvene Vest, *Gathered in the Word: Praying the Scripture in Small Groups* (Nashville: Upper Room Books, 1996), 105.

³⁰ Columba Stewart, *Prayer and Community: The Benedictine Tradition* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1998), 36.

³¹ Vest, 11.

³² Vest, 13.

³³ Hall, 28.

³⁴ Hall, 7.

books,"³⁵ are further amplified by Columba Stewart who would add "lectio is meant to be a conversation with God about one's life."³⁶

Fairly unchanged from its inception, lectio has been practiced by individuals and by groups. Either way, practitioners of lectio seek to commune with God and be illumined by the Spirit through a time of focused attention upon a word or phrase of scripture. The process of lectio is one of being mindful of God through the hearing of scripture. Vest writes:

Effective lectio stems principally from silent attentiveness to the word of scripture in relation to the specifics of each individual life. Effective lectio emphasizes openness to personal encounter at the unique intersection of life and scripture. The primary data needed for lectio is the person's willingness to be open to God in his or her own life; the primary disposition needed for lectio is willingness to offer this life data to the presence and personal 'word' of God heard by each within today's scripture.³⁷

Just as M. Basil Pennington notes, lectio is "not so much a seeking ideas, concepts, insights, or even motivating graces,"³⁸ it is more "a whole process or way of spirituality -- a journey into God, deep into the inner life of the Trinity."³⁹ Yet it is all of this, by meditatively attending to God's word in scripture, so understanding it as a time honored method of Bible study seems appropriate. Vest observes that Luther, in his *Instructions on How to Read the Holy Bible*

³⁵ Joan D. Chittister, *Wisdom Distilled from the Daily: Living the Rule of St. Benedict Today* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1990), 34.

³⁶ Stewart, 41.

³⁷ Vest, 14.

³⁸ M. Basil Pennington, *Lectio Divina: Renewing the Ancient Practice of Praying the Scriptures* (New York: Crossroad Publishing, 1998), 27.

³⁹ Pennington, 57.

suggests an approach congruent with lectio method,"⁴⁰ and Wesley, in his *"Advice on Spiritual Reading"* also suggests guidance remarkably parallel to the lectio process."⁴¹ Lectio as a discipline of faith has successfully negotiated the centuries and remains a valued spiritual practice.

The steps of lectio are remarkably simple. Pennington writes: "1. Come into the Presence and call upon the Holy Spirit; 2. Listen for ten minutes to the Lord speaking to you through the Sacred Text; and 3. Thank the Lord and take a 'word'." ⁴² Further along in his book on lectio, Pennington provides a pattern for lectio he calls "reading -- silence -- sharing."⁴³ This pattern of reading or hearing scripture, waiting silently on the Lord in a contemplation informed by the scripture, and then sharing what comes to mind, is put to use three times by the lectio participant. The first time a word or a phrase is shared; the second time, the participant shares by completing the sentence "I hear the Lord saying to me . . ."; and the third time the participant shares, "I believe the Lord wants me to . . . today / this week." In her book on group lectio, Vest uses the same basic format as suggested by Pennington.⁴⁴ This basic format of reading -- silence -- sharing is followed whether lectio is practiced individually or in a group, and has been the accepted pattern for lectio throughout the centuries.

Guided Imagery

To say that prayer has been central to the faith seems too obvious to state, yet it is important to acknowledge that prayer has been a primary activity

⁴⁰ Vest, 107.

⁴¹ Vest, 108.

⁴² Pennington, 32.

⁴³ Pennington, 132.

⁴⁴ Vest, 27.

for the faithful throughout the centuries. Organized or directed prayer has taken many forms over the centuries, keeping pace with the variety of individual prayer expressions. Whenever and however the faithful gather, whether it is for worship, study, healing, or service, prayer seems to be a key ingredient of the gathering.

Simply defined, prayer is God talk, conversation with God. Jesus directed believers to pray and gave them a model of praying and prayer, in his life and through the Lord's Prayer. He prayed often, alone or in groups, and set the tone for his followers to do likewise. Paul wrote of prayer without ceasing, encouraging the early Christians to adopt a lifestyle of intimacy and immediacy with God. Any quick review of the witness of the early church and patristic period, shows how seriously these instructions were followed. Monks would engage in prayer for hours upon hours.

As used by the contemporary church, guided imagery is a modern term for the intentional use of imagination in God talk. It uses relaxation and suggestion to guide the imagination into an encounter with the Divine. While guided imagery has been defined as "directed daydreaming,"⁴⁵ Carolyn Stahl understands it to be much more. For her, it is a form of prayer that utilizes more and deeper aspects of the person than typical God conversation. She writes:

I find that we Christians have especially limited our prayer life to the verbal, separate, discrete-object mode. We have access to Divine guidance through intuition, creativity, and a sense of unity with all things, but most of us have not been using these resources. Many of us have expressed our concerns to God in prayer. However, we have neglected to still ourselves, to open to God, and to listen. Both prayer and meditation, verbal and intuitive-imaginative approaches offer potential for spiritual

⁴⁵ Belleruth Naparstek, *Staying Well with Guided Imagery* (New York: Warner Books, 1994), 4.

growth.⁴⁶

Guided imagery sharpens our religious awareness, “so that one can be more open to receive religious experience and so that one can then, after an experience, be more sensitive to the understanding of it.”⁴⁷

Such forms of prayer are not new. Many ancient cultures, such as those in Greece, Egypt, India, and China, sought ways of bringing forth the symbolic and imaginative aspects of the human soul.⁴⁸ In addition, there is a long history of dream interpretation as a means of divine guidance, present not only in these ancient cultures but in the history of our faith tradition. From Samuel, Saul, and David to Joseph, Jesus, and Paul, dreams have been a part of the Judeo-Christian faith as imaginative avenues of God talk.

Stahl writes that the guided imagery type of meditative prayer is not just a contemporary phenomena. Saint Ignatius, some four hundred years ago, taught this method to his followers.

Saint Ignatius suggested moving into the biblical episode, being there, listening, watching, and even conversing with the people within the scene. Because he repeated the instructions to reflect “within myself,” it is clear he was not expecting the imaginative exercise to be solely for understanding the biblical situation and teaching. He was expecting personal growth, too.⁴⁹

Reviewing Saint Ignatius' *Exercises* from the point of view of guided imagery usage, reveals the long-standing importance of this spiritual discipline for the Jesuit order.

⁴⁶ Carolyn Stahl, *Opening to God: Guided Imagery Meditation on Scripture* (Nashville: Upper Room, 1977), 18.

⁴⁷ Stahl, 24

⁴⁸ Stahl, 15.

⁴⁹ Stahl, 17.

Guided imagery has found a place among the prayer disciplines of the church. While practitioners find that once they have gotten comfortable with the process and steps of guided imagery they can do it on their own, most uses of guided imagery are with prayer partners or in a group setting. Group usage of guided imagery provides the participants the opportunity to share their religious experience with others and seek confirmation or alternative insights as to its meaning.

Sacrificial Servanthood

It must be acknowledged that the gathering of Christians into groups was for more than inner or mystical reasons. In the social network of the religious group, believers found protection from the vicissitudes of the world and support for the handling of them. The epistles record efforts on the part of the early church members to care for the needy, the disabled, and the widowed. Following the example of their Lord, service was of major importance for these first Christians.

The New Testament letter attributed to James focused attention on the tension in the early church between those who thought belief was sufficient for salvation and those who felt works were equally important. As this epistle argues the case for good works, a glimpse is provided into the group life of the early church which illumines a composite of people, drawn together by belief and motivated to a lifestyle of service. At times there was a "destructive dichotomy between activity and contemplation"⁵⁰ in the life of the early church. As the church grew, this tension became more overt. Citing Origen and Gregory of Nyssa, Bacik writes that "the Fathers of the Church . . . tended to place a

⁵⁰ James J. Bacik, *Spirituality in Action* (Kansas City, Mo.: Sheed and Ward, 1997), 3.

higher value on contemplation than action.”⁵¹ With the development of the monastic movement came a new ideal of sanctity. “The monk replaced the martyr as the model of Christian perfection.”⁵² Nevertheless, the call to sacrificial servanthood in the church was not silenced and remained prevalent in church circles. Bacik traces the ongoing presence and influence of service to others as crucial to the church’s growing movement. Augustine, Benedict, Hildegard, and Francis are highlighted as instrumental in this regard,⁵³ and clearly the growth over the centuries of orphanages, hospitals, and universities illustrates the ongoing drive in the church to be of service and extend Christ’s caring to the “least of these.”

Bacik uses the term “orthopraxis,” or correct conduct in imitation of Christ, as he shows that the service component of the Christian movement is still very much present in the life of the church. He states, “contemporary political and liberation theologians have insisted that liberating activities directed to creating a more just society are essential to an authentic Christian spirituality. Dedicated discipleship calls for active involvement in fighting against institutional evil and systemic injustice.”⁵⁴ Christian faith for Bacik “is not merely a matter of affirming creeds and dogmas, but necessarily involves active engagement in the task of overcoming injustice and prejudice.”⁵⁵ As Daniel Berrigan observes, the Christian vocation is “not just a calling to live well, decently, inwardly, faithfully,

⁵¹ Bacik, 3.

⁵² Bacik, 6.

⁵³ Bacik, 13-20.

⁵⁴ Bacik, 44.

⁵⁵ Bacik, 44-45.

but a calling to give ourselves to all lives, indeed to all life.”⁵⁶ Paulo Freire, in his challenging and thought-provoking book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*,⁵⁷ provides an example of Bacik’s point and shows the influence of liberation theology upon the task of Christian education and faith formation.

Indeed, this call for social change from the ranks of the faithful has galvanized the church towards relevancy and growth in recent decades. Whether it has been with voter registration in American inner cities or peasant mobilization through base communities in Nicaragua, faithful people have been gathering together in groups to change the world and help usher in God’s reign.

Wesleyan Small Groups

No place in Christian history was the use of small groups more central than in the Wesleyan movement of the eighteenth century. “The denominations that grew most rapidly . . . were ones that made effective use of small groups. Methodists, for example, employed the class meeting as a way of encouraging unity among small groups of believers.”⁵⁸ Methodists have a unique place in the history of small groups and religious growth because of the successful use of what Wesley termed the “class meeting.” Watson writes,

The genius of the class meeting . . . was the proper synthesis of these two priorities: responsiveness to the immediacy of Christian discipleship in the world, and responsibility to the doctrines and ordinances of the church - spirit and structure, prophetic and priestly ministry, *ecclesiola in ecclesia*, all under the sovereignty of grace.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ Daniel Berrigan, *Ten Commandments for the Long Haul* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1981), 133.

⁵⁷ Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, trans. Myra Bergman Ramos, 20th Anniversary ed. (New York: Continuum, 1993).

⁵⁸ Wuthnow, *Sharing the Journey*, 41.

⁵⁹ Watson, *Class Leaders*, 147-48 (emphasis in original).

Wesley knew the value of small groups personally. While at Oxford, he and his brother started one to help them in their faith and its practice. It was called the "Holy Club." Further along in his ministry and as he was evangelizing beyond the doors of the Anglican Church, Wesley gathered those converted by his sermons into small groups to develop further their faith. While he admonished them to seek communion at their local Anglican church, he expected them to meet weekly with a group convener called "class leader" who would help them review their conduct in light of their faith. These class meetings were created to foster faithful discipleship, specifically helping the newly converted grow toward sanctification and mature in their faith, or expressed more in the Wesleyan vernacular, helping disciples become obedient to God's ways.

Three basic rules governed the class meeting: do no harm or evil, do as much good as possible, and practice the disciplines of faith. From Wesley's own pen and at length we read about these rules that gave direction to those who gathered in the class meeting:

You are supposed to have the faith that "overcometh the world." To you, therefore, it is not grievous, --

I. Carefully to abstain from doing evil; in particular -- 1. Neither to buy nor sell anything at all on the Lord's day. 2. To taste no spirituous liquor, no dram of any kind, unless prescribed by a Physician. 3. To be at a word both in buying and selling. 4. To pawn nothing, no, not to save life. 5. Not to mention the fault of any behind his back, and to stop those short that do. 6. To wear no needless ornaments, such as rings, ear-rings, necklaces, lace, ruffles. 7. To use no needless self-indulgence, such as taking snuff or tobacco, unless prescribed by a Physician.

II. Zealously to maintain good works; in particular -- 1. To give alms of such things as you possess, and that to the uttermost of your power. 2. To reprove all that is sin in your sight, and that in love and meekness of wisdom. 3. To be patterns of diligence and frugality, of self-denial, and taking up the cross daily.

III. Constantly to attend on all the ordinances of God; in

particular -- 1. To be at church and at the Lord's table every week, and at every public meeting of the Bands. 2. To attend the ministry of the word every morning, unless distance, business, or sickness prevent. 3. To use private prayer every day, and family prayer, if you are at the head of a family. 4. To read the Scriptures, and meditate therein, at every vacant hour. And, -- 5. To observe, as days of fasting and abstinence, all Fridays in the year.⁶⁰

Some of the particulars of these rules seem more natural in their cultural time than ours, yet generally they speak well of the desire on Wesley's part to give guidance to the new believers in the growth of their faith and the maturing of their spirits. Few modern believers, for example, would abstain from Sunday shopping, yet all believers would benefit from an active observance of Sabbath in their weekly life.

A closer look at these Rules reveal they are behavioral or outwardly oriented directives, not internal or attitudinal. Wesley believed the former would reveal the later, so focusing on behavior would be constructive for growth in discipleship. Wesley translated these admonitions from sermonic points to practical guidelines for his small group process. He sought the expression of faith in works as signs of obedience to Christ's imperatives and the Spirit's leading.

Watson understands this emphasis of Wesley's as he writes:

The critical question for Christian discipleship, therefore, was how to permit God's grace to foster a maturity of constant obedience, so that sanctifying grace might work with an unimpeded love. It was Wesley's theological understanding of this question which led him to adopt what at first seemed an unbelievably simple solution: a weekly meeting of like-minded persons who would exercise a mutual accountability for their discipleship. . . . The dynamic of early Methodist discipleship was established at the very beginning of the movement on the solid theological principle of distinctive justification - how not to resist the immediacy of God's gracious

⁶⁰ John Wesley, from an excerpt of "Directions Given to the Band Societies," as found in *John Wesley's Theology: A Collection from His Works*, eds. Robert W. Burton and Robert E. Chiles (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1982), 258-59.

initiatives. It remains the most important contribution made by Wesley, and by Methodism, to the Christian tradition.⁶¹

The class meeting provided a place for believers to sort through their dilemmas of life and faith, and to discover ways to live more faithfully with the support of others. It reveals Wesley's understanding that growing in faith was hard business. People needed to work at it and be encouraged in their efforts toward it. The class meeting provided the community that held believers accountable to their aspirations of living a faithful life. Members would gather weekly and, under the overview of the class leader, report on "the state of their souls." They would speak to the clauses of the General Rules and share how they did or did not conform to God's will. The group gathering provided an opportunity for a kind of confession and forgiveness, an honest accounting and subsequent renewal to go forth and submit all the more to the Spirit, in hopes of deeper faithfulness and greater obedience to God. The group was a place to work through one's resistance to God's will, and conform the participant's will and desires to that of God.

Davies observes that the class meeting practiced five common features of contemporary group theory and processes. They are: (1) "Intensive Group Experience." The class meetings involved what would appear to be a great deal of intense verbal interplay. (2) "Size Permits Interaction." The class meetings were normally sized between ten and twelve people, still recognized as the proper size for good small group process. (3) "Focus on Here-and-Now Behavior." The class meeting put an emphasis on outward behavior and the practice of the disciplines of faith. The focus was on the present observable translation of the faith, not private beliefs or future claims of the end time. (4) "Encourage Honesty, Openness, Confrontation, and Self-Disclosure." Spiritual

⁶¹ Watson, *Class Leaders*, 65.

oversight needed to be intimate and personal if it was going to be effective. Wesley's small groups practiced this insight of encouraging an ownership of personal power for one's life. (5) "Increase Self and Social Awareness and Change Behavior." As the small group dedicated itself to its task, a sense of mutual connection developed for them.⁶² Reflecting upon Davies' insights, it is no wonder the class meetings were so effective in shaping disciples. Wesley created a successful small group movement that followed guidelines which would later be recognized as directives for all small groups in general.

Davies writes:

The members, as a unit, apparently discovered for themselves the unique social power and satisfactions that develop out of a sense of community. This feeling of oneness had at least three growth-promoting effects. It created a group consciousness that served as a renewing basis for participation in the class meeting. It stimulated a willingness toward deeper sharing by allowing each member to more accurately see his commonality with the others. Third, it fostered a sense of belonging and personal support.⁶³

In short, Wesley's class meetings created a successful small group movement which oftentimes attained its goal of making faithful disciples.

Watson has observed that the class meeting was a pragmatic and task-oriented interpersonal gathering. He sees in these small groups "what Kurt Lewin has defined as an instrument of planned behavioral change, a context or 'field' in which a process of change through interpersonal relationships can be effected and sustained."⁶⁴ Kurt Lewin is considered the father of the study of group theory and process, and in this reference, Watson argues that Wesley's

⁶² The features are highlights from James A. Davies, "Small Groups: Are They Really So New?," *Christian Education Journal* 5, no. 2 (1984): 46-48.

⁶³ Davies, 48.

⁶⁴ Watson, *Early Methodist Class Meeting*, 132.

small groups did indeed function in a fashion commensurate with the theories of small groups that would be delineated centuries later by Lewin. Along that same line of modern social analysis illuminating earlier behavior, it is noted that these class meetings functioned according to the modern theory of cognitive dissonance. Leon Festinger and Elliot Aaronson define cognitive dissonance as, "the simultaneous existence of cognition which in one way or another do not fit together (dissonance) leads to effort on the part of the person to somehow make them fit better (dissonance reduction)."⁶⁵ Watson remarks that "there could have been no more direct instance of this than the searching catechism of the weekly meetings."⁶⁶

Methodist class meetings were not just a phenomena of the eighteenth century. They were used in Methodist circles in America long into the twentieth century, that is, until their popularity waned and participation in them declined. Hillary Chrisley explains "The class meeting fell into decline due to a lack of a flexible structure and a reluctance to be imaginative in running the meetings."⁶⁷ Norwood agrees that the decline had something to do with a rigid format and how it focused on form rather than substance in the later years.⁶⁸ Gregory Schneider suggests that it is Watson's opinion that "when the class meeting focused on inward religious experience" rather than outward behaviors of discipleship "it declined into effusiveness and formalism" and, losing its real

⁶⁵ Leon Festinger and Elliot Aaronson, "Arousal and Reduction of Dissonance in Social Contexts," in *Group Dynamics: Research and Theory*, 3rd ed., eds. Dorwin Cartwright and Alvin Zander (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), 125.

⁶⁶ Watson, *Early Methodist Class Meeting*, 133 (emphasis in original).

⁶⁷ Hillary Andrea Chrisley, *The Wesleyan Class Meeting: A Guide on the Quest for Perfection*, D.Min. project, Claremont School of Theology, 1989 (Ann Arbor: UMI, 1989), 39.

⁶⁸ Norwood, 162.

focus, lost its power to maintain itself.⁶⁹

Whatever it was that led to the decline of the class meeting in the mid-twentieth century, the significance of abandoning class meetings cannot be over-estimated. The class meeting was responsible for the growth of Methodism, the faithfulness of its members, and the generally accepted use of small groups for religious purposes. In its abandonment may be discovered one of the primary reasons for the denomination's decline.

Modern Small Groups

Many modern small groups stand on the shoulders of these earlier Wesleyan small group practices. Interestingly, while class meetings were in decline in America, their use took root in the mission field and continue today. Nam Ok Lee observes that "the class meeting was a successful means for rapid church growth, and it was used by every denomination in Korea. The Korean Methodist Church has held class meetings since it started, patterned after Wesley's meetings."⁷⁰ It is commonly reported that many of the fastest growing churches in Korea and elsewhere use this cell style of congregational organization and discipleship training pioneered by Wesley.

In the 1940s and after, significant work was done by Kurt Lewin to research the effect of groups upon people. He worked in Iowa and later at MIT, and created the National Training Laboratory for Group Development at Bethel, Maine. Lewin's seminal work tested and collected observations about various small group characteristics, which were then put to use in training people in the use of small groups for change.

⁶⁹ A. Gregory Schneider, review of *The Early Methodist Class Meeting: Its Origin and Significance*, by David Lowes Watson, *Church History* 56, no. 1 (Mar. 1987): 137.

⁷⁰ Nam Ok Lee, *Wesleyan Class Meeting: Its Relationship to Church Renewal and Growth*, D.Min. project, Claremont School of Theology, 1989 (Ann Arbor: UMI, 1989), 28.

In the early 1950's the Episcopal Church initiated the first use by churches of training laboratories modeled after the Lewin-oriented NTL laboratory. These church models were designed to assist clergy in becoming sensitive to the forces that are cohesive or destructive, positive or negative, in the group life of the church.⁷¹

Groups that taught people how to facilitate groups ran hand-in-hand with the growth of groups for the sake of the change of the participants. The Johnson brothers estimate that in the mid 1970s over five million Americans had been involved in small group activities aimed at personal growth, with millions more engaged in self-help groups.⁷² There were T-groups, encounter groups, and sensitivity groups; Transcendental Meditation groups and groups of Jesus Freaks abounded; and there were groups driven by a particular style of psychotherapy, such as transactional analysis or gestalt. The variety was endless, and they all found a large cohort of participants.

Casteel coined the term "personal groups" for this movement as it manifested itself in the church because of the primary kind of relationship. "Their purpose is to help members come into a primary personal relationship with God, with other persons, and with themselves."⁷³ He identified a number of aspects of personal groups that he called their basic purpose and nature.

They might be summed up in the New Testament admonition to "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 3:18). That growth is to be sought and found in various forms: (1) in *self-understanding* and self-acceptance, and (2) in a similar *understanding and acceptance* of other persons; (3) in knowledge and *understanding of the Christian faith* as given in the Bible, in statements of Christian teachings, and in devotional works; and also, (4) in a firsthand personal and *experiential knowing of God* through meeting with him; (5) in being a

⁷¹ D. R. Hunter, "Group Dynamics," in *Encyclopedia of Religious Education*, eds. Iris V. Culley and Kendig Brubaker Culley (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1990), 279.

⁷² Johnson and Johnson, 480.

⁷³ Casteel, 19.

responsible *decision-making individual* before the demands, problems, and claims of one's life - at work, in the home, among people in society, church, and community; (6) *in the capacity to continue growing* in these and in other ways unique to the life, being, and circumstance of each person.⁷⁴

Many groups blossomed that gave expression to one or a number of these purposes delineated by Casteel.

While many observers thought the small group movement had crested in its influence in the 1960s, Robert Wuthnow has noticed that its influence and occurrence continued unabated because of the abiding value of small groups to their participants.⁷⁵ In fact, Wuthnow sees small groups as commonplace in American life, and particularly crucial to the life of modern religious organizations.

Small groups are no stranger to American religion. They have deep roots in the Methodist class meetings and Baptist prayer meetings of the nineteenth century. They resemble the Sunday school classes and youth groups that have characterized many other religious traditions as well. Yet, the current popularity of small groups - the extent to which people are turning to them in search of spirituality, and the ways in which religious leaders are championing them - is unprecedented.⁷⁶

In 1994, Wuthnow published *Sharing the Journey: Support Groups and America's New Quest for Community* and *"I Come Away Stronger": How Small Groups Are Shaping American Religion*, two books that researched and documented the influence of small groups in American society. His findings were interesting. He writes: "The small-group movement has emerged as a serious effort to combat the forces of fragmentation and anonymity in our society

⁷⁴ Casteel, 193-94 (emphasis in original).

⁷⁵ Wuthnow, *Sharing the Journey*, 40.

⁷⁶ Robert Wuthnow, *"I Come Away Stronger": How Small Groups Are Shaping American Religion* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1994), 344.

and to reunite spirituality with its roots in human community.”⁷⁷ The small groups are connecting people with others and providing an occasion for interpersonal relations that is accessible and convenient, yet one that also provides some boundaries and limits so that these relationships are more manageable and defined. Wuthnow calls them “small, portable sources of interpersonal support.”⁷⁸

In his statistical analysis, Wuthnow observed that 40% of Americans are currently involved in a small group, with 55% of those surveyed reporting that they have been in groups in the past or now. Of these current participants, 50% are in groups that meet once a week, and 40% are in groups that meet for two hours. A significant finding was that 71% of those involved in small groups told the researchers that their group involvement was very important or extremely important to them.⁷⁹ Wuthnow sums up these findings:

In sum, the small-group movement has been successful in attracting a relatively large segment of the American public into its ranks. Its members attended meetings frequently and over long periods of time. Most who have ever been involved are still involved. Current members express high levels of satisfaction with their groups. They feel cared for and supported. And they believe their groups function well.⁸⁰

Why are people in small groups? Wuthnow’s research reveals that “many people turn to small groups because they are lonely, in need of support, and want stronger ties to their community. Yet the desire for community appears to be less significant as a factor driving the small-group movement than

⁷⁷ Wuthnow, *Sharing the Journey*, 40.

⁷⁸ Wuthnow, *Sharing the Journey*, 16.

⁷⁹ Wuthnow, “*I Come Away Stronger*,” 370-73.

⁸⁰ Wuthnow, “*I Come Away Stronger*,” 373.

the desire for spiritual growth.”⁸¹ In fact, Wuthnow took a closer look at this and noticed that no matter what the expressed purpose was of the group or who gathered for the group, “61% of all groups members say their ‘faith or spirituality’ has been influenced by being involved in their group. And more than half of these people, 57%, say their faith has been ‘deepened a lot’ by their involvement.”⁸² These are revealing statistics about the inherent spiritual quality of small groups. Comparing these church groups and non-church groups, Wuthnow writes:

What distinguishes the two kinds of groups (church and non-church groups) most clearly is that spirituality itself is one of the primary factors of participation in church-based groups. Two-thirds of the members of church-based groups (68%) say that “wanting to become more disciplined in your spiritual life” was a reason why they became involved in their group. In contrast, only 15% of the members of non church groups listed this among their reasons.⁸³

Furthermore, Wuthnow discovered:

Members of church-based groups join in hopes of deepening their spirituality - and most believe that their faith is, in fact, deepened as a result. When asked about their personal needs, 97% say they have experienced a need to be “part of a group that helps you grow spiritually.” And 64% say this need has been fully met.⁸⁴

Wuthnow noticed that 57% of groups are connected with a church’s or a synagogue’s ministries, and 95% of these groups’ participants say it is the church or the synagogue to which they belong. It turns out that 61% of them are

⁸¹ Wuthnow, *“I Come Away Stronger,”* 386.

⁸² Wuthnow, *Sharing the Journey*, 55.

⁸³ Wuthnow, *“I Come Away Stronger,”* 381.

⁸⁴ Wuthnow, *“I Come Away Stronger,”* 382.

active in their church with 50% saying they have become more active due to the groups. He noticed that church size and denomination does not affect the statistics too much, yet it is more likely that conservative church members will be in groups than liberal church members. Women comprise 63% of the group members, and participation is greater in the southern and rural areas of the country than in the northern and urban areas.⁸⁵

Concerning spirituality, Wuthnow writes: "most small groups that have anything to do with spirituality do not simply let the sacred emerge as a by-product of their time together. Instead, they prescribe activities for growing closer to the sacred."⁸⁶ The nature of the sacred is thought to be changing in the current small group movement. "The sacred comes to be associated with the process or activities by which it is pursued";⁸⁷ and "the most general way in which small groups are redefining the sacred, therefore, is by replacing explicit creeds and doctrines with *implicit* norms devised by the groups."⁸⁸

Wuthnow noticed a number of contributions of small-group spirituality: Among these were: (1) it makes faith available to everyone; (2) it encourages individual responsibility for the nurturing of one's faith; (3) it helps individuals put their faith into practice; and (4) it provides time for the primary way people care for one another, prayer.⁸⁹ These positive contributions of small groups are readily identifiable in the earlier presentation of the role of groups in Christian history. In addition though, Wuthnow noticed a number of limitations of small-

⁸⁵ Wuthnow, *"I Come Away Stronger,"* 373-78.

⁸⁶ Wuthnow, *Sharing the Journey*, 16.

⁸⁷ Wuthnow, *Sharing the Journey*, 16-18.

⁸⁸ Wuthnow, *Sharing the Journey*, 19 (emphasis in original).

⁸⁹ Wuthnow, *"I Come Away Stronger,"* 349-55.

group spirituality. They included: (1) the promotion of a 'me-first' religion; (2) promotion of an "anything goes" form of spirituality; and (3) cultivation of a cheap-grace spirituality.⁹⁰ These limitations highlight how groups also can be used to nurture a spirituality that falls beyond the accepted scope of orthodoxy or a spirituality that is at odds with an understanding of emotional or religious maturity.

In *Sharing the Journey* Wuthnow lists the overall effects of small groups.

1. Forty percent of the American public is currently involved in some kind of small groups. 2. The people who are involved in small groups are not terribly different from those who are not involved, that is, small group members come from all walks of life and from all segments of American society. 3. Small groups in American society are enormously diverse. 4. At the same time, small groups are fairly stable and are taken quite seriously by most of their members. To be sure, they are fluid and diverse, but they are not one-night stands. 5. Small groups provide encouragement and a wide variety of other services to most of their members. 6. It does not take a great deal of special knowledge or skill to make a small group function well. 7. Small groups do not, for the most part, compromise the individuality of their members. 8. Many small-group members feel spiritually nurtured by their groups. 9. Small groups make a difference to the spiritual lives of their members mostly by demonstrating love, by nurturing intimate relationships, and by giving people an opportunity to tell their stories. 10. The members of small groups are quite often prompted to become more active in their communities, to help others who may be in need, and to think more deeply about pressing social and political issues.⁹¹

Qualities and Characteristics of Small Groups

Much has been learned in recent decades about small groups. In the review of literature, the following insights warrant reporting. R. E. Y. Wickett has identified eight necessary ingredients for good learning in small groups. They

⁹⁰ Wuthnow, "I Come Away Stronger," 356-61.

⁹¹ Wuthnow, *Sharing the Journey*, 342-47.

are recommended to help the small group experience satisfactorily advance the learning process.

1. Discover: the process by which something new is revealed, whether it is new information, skill, or any other thing to be learned. 2. Examine: the process by which one examines or considers the new information, and so on, which has been discovered. 3. Share: the process which involves sharing one's own results of discovery and examination and hearing the results of either one other's discovery and examination or that of a group of others. 4. Analysis: the process by which the group continues the process of examination which emerges from the sharing process in order to enable the learners to deepen their understanding through a collective process. 5. Decision: the process by which the learners determine how to apply that which has been learned. This may be done individually or collectively, but some sharing will reinforce individual decisions. 6. Action: the process of putting into action the decisions learners have made. 7. Reaction: the process by which the learning continues after the event as new data are generated by action.⁹²

Johnson and Johnson present a number of dimensions that need to be present in groups for them to be effective. They are as follows:

1. Group goals must be clearly understood, be relevant to the needs of group members, highlight the positive interdependence of members, and evoke from every member a high level of commitment to their accomplishment. 2. Group members must communicate their ideas and feelings accurately and clearly. 3. Participation and leadership must be distributed among members. 4. Appropriate decision-making procedures must be used flexibly to match them with the needs of the situation. 5. Conflicts should be encouraged and managed constructively. 6. Power and influence need to be approximately equal throughout the group. 7. Group cohesion needs to be high. 8. Problem-solving adequacy should be high. 9. The interpersonal effectiveness of members needs to be high.⁹³

Along with the mention of each dimension needed for group effectiveness,

⁹² R. E. Y. Wickett, *Models of Adult Religious Education Practice* (Birmingham, Ala.: Religious Education Press, 1991), 62.

⁹³ Johnson and Johnson, 24-27.

comes the understanding that group ineffectiveness is close at hand.

Examining each dimension reversed raises the awareness of how groups can be ineffective, if not destructive, to participants and their goals for growth. For example, item 2 mentions the value of clear communication and implies that group difficulty will arise if participants do not share their ideas and feelings in an understandable manner. Item 5 lifts up the subject of group conflict and teaches that conflict is natural to the group process and should not be repressed, yet the conflict must be handled positively, so it does not become destructive to the group. Additionally, item 6 addresses the concern of power and implies that unequally exercised influence is problematic to the success of the group.

People change for a variety of reasons. They may gain an insight, sense an emotion, or learn a behavior that appears helpful to them in their lives. All change does not come from group connection; solitary contemplation or private conversations with another are surely growth-producing. Yet groups can be particularly helpful to individuals and their desire for change. The Johnsons have identified a number of “unique advantages” of groups to aid in the process of individual change.

1. Groups provide a more heterogeneous social setting in which interpersonal skills may be learned, mastered, and integrated into one's behavioral repertoire.
2. Groups generate a sense of community, belonging, support, acceptance, and assistance that eases the pain associated with therapeutic exploration and encourages risk taking in achieving growth goals.
3. Groups influence the behavioral attitudinal patterns of members.
4. Groups may induce and then reduce powerful feelings.
5. Groups require the use of a wide variety of interpersonal skills and competencies.
6. Groups provide opportunities for participants to understand and help their peers.
7. Groups provide a variety of perspectives that stimulate insight into and understanding of one's problems and behavior.
8. Groups provide sources of comparison for participants.
9. Groups provide a variety of sources for

feedback. 10. Groups provide a remedial environment for the solution of problems. 11. Groups provide the constructive peer relationships needed for healthy social and cognitive development.⁹⁴

As they examined groups and their characteristics, the Johnsons noticed that individual change was not only supported by certain qualities of groups but that change was linked to certain events in the process. They identified nine of these events that they thought directly promoted change or reduced blocks to change. They were:

1. Change is promoted by the emotional expression of positive and negative feelings toward other group members and about important life events.
2. Change is promoted by the experiencing of intense positive and negative emotions, whether or not they are expressed.
3. Change is promoted by the observation of other group members having significant emotional experiences.
4. Change is promoted by the inculcation of hope and a decrease in demoralization.
5. Change is promoted by the decrease in participants' egocentrism and the increase in their perspective-taking abilities.
6. Change is promoted by self-disclosure, the realization that others have similar feelings, and insight into one's problems.
7. Change is promoted by experimentation with new behavior and by feedback received from others.
8. Change is promoted by other group members modeling constructive behavior and attitude patterns the participants wish to master.
9. Change is promoted by cognitive insight into one's problems, behavior patterns, and attitude patterns.⁹⁵

As Lewin developed his studies of groups, he did so with a model of action research. He looked at small groups as they actually existed and behaved. He researched them in their action and development, not as a static theoretical subject of his study. "His research demonstrated that learning is achieved most productively in groups whose members can interact and then

⁹⁴ Johnson and Johnson, 481-83.

⁹⁵ Johnson and Johnson, 483-86.

reflect on their mutual experiences.”⁹⁶ From Lewin’s research, ideas for individual and group growth were stimulated. Experiential learning was understood as a most valuable method for substantial adult learning, growth, and change.

Experiential learning may be defined as generating an action theory from your own experiences and then continually modifying it to improve your effectiveness. The purpose of experiential learning is to affect the learner in three ways: (1) the learner’s cognitive structures are altered, (2) the learner’s attitudes are modified, and (3) the learner’s repertoire of behavioral skills is expanded. These three elements are interconnected and change as a whole, not as separate parts.⁹⁷

In terms of Lewin’s theory, personal change is defined in terms of three major conceptualizations of personhood, namely, mind, emotion, and action, and is thereby suggestive of the more contemporary holistic understanding of people and change. Expanding the theory to include one’s soul, relationship to others, and connection to the environment would broaden the theory considerably toward a more holistic perspective. However it might be expanded, though, it is important to note Lewin’s contribution to learning theory. Lewin discovered in his research that the student who actively participates in the process of learning, the student who thoroughly engages the process, will be the student who does the greatest learning. Participatory learning and learning that is geared to involving more of the person is more effective in producing learning and change than learning opportunities that are limited in their approach and solely opportunities for fact-gathering.

The information of the preceding section provided guidelines and emphases instructive to the shaping of the small groups in the study that

⁹⁶ Johnson and Johnson, 33.

⁹⁷ Johnson and Johnson, 44-45.

follows, a study which puts some of these theories of group process and personal change to the test. The next chapter surveys the self-reporting instruments available to measure these changes.

CHAPTER 4

MEASUREMENT TOOLS OF SPIRITUAL GROWTH

Finding a way to measure spiritual growth is a challenging task. It seems to be something many religious practitioners and observers of the human condition avoid, asserting that things of the Spirit are ethereal and subjective at best, not something that could or should be quantified. Gerald May writes,

So one of the most significant insights which has grown out of my looking at human spirituality is that I cannot legitimately look at human spirituality. To do so somehow pulls me outside of it and objectifies it. And that forces the whole process into a frozen image which excludes me from seeing the vital and dynamic energy of life. The study of human spirituality cannot take place in the same way that one might study sexuality or aggression. To objectify spirituality in this way is clearly to miss it.¹

May's argument sounds familiar to that issued at psychology when it first launched into assessing a person's emotional state and well-being. Many people thought it impossible to assess the internal emotional world of people. Pioneers in psychology had an uphill battle to earn respect in the scientific community, since the field seemed so suppositionary and subjective. Yet, discoveries were made and means attained to chart that which seemed so immeasurable.

In some respects, May's points are well taken about spirituality. Who can catch the wind? How is love measured and quantified between people, let alone between a disciple and the Lord? Yet still, when the wind blows, we see evidence of it and can measure certain qualities of it. We can point to its direction and measure its speed. We pick up the debris from its impact. Likewise, there are aspects to love that are possible to note. A person in love

¹ Gerald G. May, *Care of Mind, Care of Spirit: A Psychiatrist Explores Spiritual Direction* (San Francisco: HarpersSanFrancisco, 1992), 86.

does not beat the other. The desire to be together is often expressed in acts of affection, love making is engaged with some regularity. When in love, a person expresses a sense of concern and provision for the other that most likely would not be expressed if the other person was a stranger. Similarly, there are qualities about spirituality and spiritual growth which are noticeable.

Newton Malony has observed that "Spiritual living can be understood within a three step model."² He names these steps as insights or understandings, attitudes, and actions. Insights refer to the awareness of who one truly is, a child of God of inestimable value, and understanding refers to recognizing the events of life as seen through the eyes of God's steadfast love and providence. Attitudes are both public and private expressions toward the religion of one's spiritual insights and understandings. Actions are a crucial index of whether the insights, understandings, and attitudes are functioning, and is seen as religious involvement in church activities. "In fact, insights or understandings, and attitudes which do not result in worship, expression, application, and witness are deficient, in my opinion."³

It is recognized in the parish context that many pastors are able to readily point out parishioners who are further along spiritually than others. On the Board of Ordained Ministry, clergy are consistently called upon to discern readiness and effectiveness for ministry, qualities which are closely related to a clergy candidate's spiritual maturity, at least as it is expressed in the vocational arena of ministry. Though the Board might shy away from quantifying religious maturity or declaring unequivocally that a person is spiritually mature or immature, it does recognize that these terms reflect a personal reality which is

² H. Newton Malony, "Making a Religious Diagnosis: The Use of Religious Assessment in Pastoral Care and Counseling," *Pastoral Psychology* 41, no. 4 (1993): 246.

³ Malony, *Making a Religious Diagnosis*, 245.

somehow intuitively known or sensed from the information gathered about the clergy candidates. Finding a way to measure this intuitive recognition and assessment of maturity is the challenge.

Potential Measurement Instruments

When we think of spiritual growth and faith maturity, the first thoughts of its inability to be measured give way to considerations of how possibly it could be measured. Dr. Paul Pruyser blazed a trail in this field with his work at the Menninger Foundation Hospital in Kansas. He wanted to supplement his psychological assessment of mentally ill patients with information on their faith and religious practices. Pruyser understood that a person's religion had a major effect upon their psychological state and their general well-being. His hope was that in the gathering of this additional information his staff would be better equipped to care for the hospital patients. Pruyser's work presented a premise and laid a foundation for subsequent work in measuring spiritual maturity.

Not surprisingly though, there are few instruments available that purport to measure these elusive qualities of life, let alone actually provide statistical proof of the validity of their measurements. A literature search has uncovered four instruments that attempt to do some measurement in this area. They are: the Faith Maturity Index by Benson, Donahue, and Erickson; the Christian Experience Inventory by Alter; the Spiritual Well-Being Scale by Ellison; and the Religious Status Inventory by Maloney. A brief review of each follows, and then a longer presentation of the instrument chosen for this study.

The Faith Maturity Index. The Faith Maturity Index was created by Peter L. Benson, Michael J. Donahue, and Joseph A. Erickson. It appears in a study run by the Search Institute funded by the Lily Endowment and it is through

this institute that one gets permission to use the instrument. The authors present and discuss the instrument in an article entitled "The Faith Maturity Scale: Conceptualization, Measurement, and Empirical Validation" appearing in *Research in the Social Scientific Study of Religion*.⁴

"Development of the scale began with this working definition: Faith maturity is the degree to which a person embodies the priorities, commitments, and perspectives characteristic of vibrant and life-transforming faith, as these have been understood in 'mainline' Protestant traditions."⁵ The index is a series of 38 statements for which the person self-rates on the scale of "never true" to "always true." The results are then tabulated in these eight dimensions that the authors believe reveal a person's faith maturity: (1) Trusts and believes; (2) Experiences the fruits of faith; (3) Integrates faith and life; (4) Seeks spiritual growth; (5) Experiences and nurtures faith in community; (6) Holds life-affirming values; (7) Advocates social change; (8) Acts and serves. These dimensions examine a person's faith from the perspective of "love of neighbor" or horizontal plane and "love of God" or vertical plane. The person's answers place the person into categories of: undeveloped faith -- low vertical and low horizontal; verticals -- high vertical and low horizontal; horizontals -- low vertical and high horizontal; integrated faith -- high vertical and high horizontal.

This instrument is appealing simply from the bold claim in its title. The dimensions used to measure maturity are fairly comprehensive and the breakdown of its data into four summary categories appears helpful. Using data organizing scales of love of neighbor and love of God is right to the point of

⁴ Peter L. Benson, Michael J. Donahue, and Joseph A. Erickson "The Faith Maturity Scale: Conceptualization, Measurement, and Empirical Validation" *Research in the Social Scientific Study of Religion* 5 (1993): 1-26.

⁵ Benson, Donahue, and Erickson, 3.

spiritual maturity when defined as developed discipleship. Yet it seems overstated to propose to measure such dimensions and arrive with some certainty at these categories through only 38 questions. Also, as the authors discuss the eight criterion that undergird their scale, they mention that "The indicators of faith maturity should not presume an institutional attachment or involvement."⁶ This would be problematic for a definition of spiritual maturity leading toward Christian faithful discipleship. Commitment to and involvement through a church is a major indicator. Many of the signs of maturing and developing discipleship would be evidenced in participation in and leadership for the body of Christ as manifested in the local setting. A measurement tool that intentionally overlooked this would only be narrowly helpful.

The Christian Experience Inventory. The Christian Experience Inventory was created by Margaret G. Alter, a psychologist with strong connection to the Episcopal religious community in San Francisco. Dr. Alter grants permission to use the instrument as long as results are shared with her and its use is not manipulative of the participants.

Alter writes, "I devised a theory of Christian religious development based upon believing adults' experience of an ongoing relationship with God as Person."⁷ The instrument has 24 questions that reveal a person's sense of experience in five areas. They are: (1) Growth of faith; (2) Trust in God; (3) Cost of faith; (4) Concern for others; (5) Justification by faith. A person who takes the inventory is then tabulated as having a "modest or medium or strong experience of" one of these experiential areas of Christian faith. Alter thinks that those who would be tabulated as having a "strong experience of" would be properly

⁶ Benson, Donahue, and Erickson, 5.

⁷ Margaret G. Alter, "An Empirical Study of Christian Religious Maturity: Its Implications for Parish Ministry," *Pastoral Psychology* 37, no.3 (Spring 1989): 153.

understood as tending toward spiritual maturity, while those who reported a "weak experience of" one of these areas would be understood tending toward spiritual immaturity. This interpretation was confirmed for Alter by a series of spiritual directors who rated participants on a maturity scale. Their ratings compared favorably to the scores from Alter's instrument.⁸

Alter's instrument seems too brief to substantiate its claims. While she writes of her scale revealing maturity in two articles in *Pastoral Psychology*,⁹ the question remains about how much her scale really fulfills this claim, since her five dimensions of spiritual maturity are limiting and her statistical validation is absent.

The Spiritual Well-Being Scale. The Spiritual Well-Being Scale was created by Craig W. Ellison of Life Advance, Inc. The author reports high reliability and validity, and requires a fee per testing instrument for its usage.

The scale has 20 statements over which the person self-rates between "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree." There are two facets being examined in the statements. They are termed: (1) the vertical - - sense of well-being in relation to God; and (2) the horizontal - - sense of life purpose and life satisfaction. In an article on this scale by the author entitled "Spiritual Well-Being: Conceptualization and Measurement"¹⁰ Ellison writes: "Spiritual well-being does not appear to be the same as spiritual maturity, though we would expect a spiritually mature person to have a very positive sense of well-

⁸ Alter, *Empirical Study of Christian Religious Maturity*, 156.

⁹ In addition to the above mentioned article, see also: Margaret G. Alter, "Phenomenology of Christian Religious Maturity," *Pastoral Psychology* 34, no. 3 (Spring 1986):151-59.

¹⁰ Craig W. Ellison, "Spiritual Well-being: Conceptualization and Measurement," *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 11 (Winter 1983): 330-40.

being.”¹¹ Ellison's own statement about the instrument provides the critique for its use in this project paper.

The Religious Status Inventory. The Religious Status Inventory was devised by H. Newton Malony, a United Methodist clergy and retired professor from the Graduate Psychology School of Fuller Theological Seminary. Malony allows use of the instrument when research results are reported back to Malony.

The inventory has 160 statements over which the person self-rates between “not true of me” to “true of me.” The responses are then assessed in terms of seven factors and eight dimensions. The seven factors are: (1) Importance of Religion in Daily Life; (2) Worship and Commitment; (3) Complexity of Faith; (4) Rejection of Simplistic Faith; (5) Involvement in Organized Religion; (6) Interpersonal Ethics; and (7) Optimal Religious Functioning. The eight dimensions are: (1) Awareness of God; (2) Acceptance of God's grace and steadfast love; (3) Being repentant and responsible; (4) Knowing God's leadership and direction; (5) Involvement in organized religion; (6) Experiencing fellowship; (7) Being ethical; and (8) Affirming openness in faith.

This instrument is attractive because of its comprehensiveness, and so was chosen to be used in this study. The seven factors and eight dimensions provide two analytical passes over the terrain of Christian spirituality and discipleship, highlighting more aspects of spirituality and discipleship as discussed in chapter 2 than the other instruments considered. Where the instrument appears to be lacking is in its omission of physiological or health concerns in examining a person's religious status. This minor liability can be remedied by augmenting the instrument with questions directed to these

¹¹ Ellison, 332.

concerns.

The Religious Status Inventory

The Religious Status Inventory is the current outgrowth of work by Malony going back to his years of association with Dr. Paul Pruyser, a pioneer in the field of the psychology of religion and a staff member of the Menninger Foundation in Kansas. Pruyser's book *The Minister as Diagnostician*¹² became the basis for the construction of Malony's first attempt to measure religious maturity. This instrument was created in 1982 and called "The Nelson-Malony Religious Status Interview." It was "intended to provide mental health professionals a means for assessing religious maturity with a rationale and accuracy similar to that with which they assess intelligence and personality."¹³ Its purpose was to understand patients better and thereby assist in their treatment.

Malony enumerates six assumptions behind the interview. "The first assumption is that 'religion' refers to substantive social reality rather than dynamic subjective motivation."¹⁴ The interview sought the person's responses to questions about situations and activities of life rather than theological ponderings. "Secondly, it is an interview schedule which evaluates the Christian religion, not religion in general."¹⁵ The interview attempted to assess maturity in Christian faith, not generalized spirituality or religiousness. "In the third place, the interview schedule attempts to assess the way these beliefs

¹² Paul Pruyser, *The Minister as Diagnostician* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1976).

¹³ H. Newton Malony, "Assessing Religious Maturity," in *Psychotherapy and the Religiously Committed Patient*, ed. E.M. Stern (New York: Hayworth Press, 1985), 26.

¹⁴ Malony, "Assessing Religious Maturity," 26.

¹⁵ Malony, "Assessing Religious Maturity," 26.

function in the life of the person being evaluated."¹⁶ While the interview asks what people believe, it tries to assess how these beliefs are incorporated in daily life, their functionality. "The fourth assumption . . . is that what people say about their religion is the 'sine qua non' or essence of their faith."¹⁷ Being an interview, verbal ability is relied upon for adequately and accurately disclosing a person's faith. "The fifth assumption follows from the fourth. Here is it assumed that the ability to talk about religion should be spontaneous."¹⁸ Little prompting or assistance is provided people in reporting their faith. What is said, is important, as said. "Sixth, the interview is assumed to be both reliable and valid."¹⁹ Initial testing done by Malony supported the value of the interview independent of the interviewer and when re-administered weeks later. Malony remarks that "when pastors were asked to nominate very mature, mature, and immature persons from their churches, their interview scores tended to correlate with designations by their pastors."²⁰

These assumptions for the Religious Status Interview similarly undergird Malony's subsequent instrument, the Religious Status Inventory, which was put to use in this study. The one major difference between the two instruments is the methodology of seeking the information about the participant. With the instrument later developed, the participant answers questions on a self-rating Likert Scale which is then numerically scored by computer, while with the earlier interview version, the participant verbally answered the interviewer's

¹⁶ Malony, "Assessing Religious Maturity," 27.

¹⁷ Malony, "Assessing Religious Maturity," 27.

¹⁸ Malony, "Assessing Religious Maturity," 27.

¹⁹ Malony, "Assessing Religious Maturity," 28.

²⁰ Malony, "Assessing Religious Maturity," 28.

questions with the answers being scored by the interviewer. This change minimized any scoring contamination that might have been made by the interviewer's subjectivity. In addition, this aided those respondents who were not verbally facile in expressing the qualities of their faith. Increasing the number of queries from 33 to 160, registered a more comprehensive assessment of the person's faith.

There is an additional assumption that must be examined that is underlying Malony's work with the Religious Status Interview and the Religious Status Inventory. It is the definition of spiritual maturity. Based on prior work done in the field of faith and maturity, the following definition was adopted by Malony:

Mature Christians are those who have identity, integrity, and inspiration. They "identify" in that their self-understanding is as children of God – created by Him and destined by Him to live according to a divine plan. They have "integrity" in that their daily life is lived in the awareness that they have been saved by God's grace from the guilt of sin and that they can freely respond to God's will in the present. They have "inspiration" in that they live with the sense that God is available to sustain, comfort, encourage, and direct their lives on a daily basis. These dimensions of maturity relate to belief in God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. They pertain to the Christian doctrines of creation, redemption, and sanctification. They provide the foundation for practical daily living.²¹

With this comprehensive definition, albeit gender-biased in its understanding of the divinity, Malony tries to stay grounded on Trinitarian principles and employ the theological categories of God's grace. Perhaps what is most important in this definition is the implication that religious maturity is something evidenced in daily life, not just something adhered to intellectually or conceptually. Religious maturity is measurable, from Malony's point of view, because it is observable

²¹ Malony, "Assessing Religious Maturity," 28.

and reportable. It is given expression in real life behaviors and actions.

However it may be argued that religious maturity may be internal to the person, Malony stands in the tradition that counters and says faith must and does have external fruits which can be interpreted as more or less mature.

In reference to this understanding of religious maturity revealing itself in measurable way, Malony writes,

[W]e assumed that there is an agreed-upon general corpus of Christian "functional theology" which can be stated and measured. . . . We understand functional theology to mean the manner in which convictions are expressed, applied, and utilized in daily life rather than a set of creedal statements or denominational practices affirmed in isolation from the ways religion is applied to living. We have assumed that these applications of faith to life would be universally agreed upon by all denominations even though they might not exhaust the special emphases of a given church body.²²

Malony's instrument attempts to move in the direction of measuring the outward manifestation of a person's spirituality, and the degree to which these expressions reflect or embody Trinitarian theology and the doctrines of prevenient, saving, and sanctifying grace correlate to a person's religious maturity.

The eight dimensions that were used for assessing peoples' responses to the 33 questions of the interview and are used to evaluate the answers to the 160 questions of the inventory are based on seven theological categories suggested by Pruyser as important for use in the assessment of how Christian faith functions in peoples' lives and one additional dimension added by Malony.²³ His instrument scores the participant in terms of these eight

²² H. Newton Malony, "The Clinical Assessment of Optimal Religious Functioning," *Review of Religious Research* 30, no.1 (Sept. 1988): 4.

²³ Malony, "Clinical Assessment of Optimal Religious Functioning," 8.

dimensions and an additional seven factors. The dimensions are foundational to the analysis, while the factors were added later as a helpful second review of the data.

Questions are asked of the participants that were crafted to reveal one aspect of faith or another. All questions relate to some dimension or factor, and they are presented in the questionnaire in a random order. The participants are asked to reflect upon themselves in terms of the questions and answer each with a "more so like me" or "less so like me" determination, ranging from one to five on the scale. The questions are presented so that for some the five rating would indicate greater maturity while for others the one rating indicates the more mature response. After these reverse scores are taken into account and all the self-ratings are calculated, the participants' scores are tabulated by dimension or factor. The higher the score in the dimension or factor, the more "mature" the participant is considered in terms of that aspect of faith. The overall score gives an overall "maturity" indicator for the participants.

The first dimension is "Awareness of God." This is the degree to which persons experience a sense of awe and creatureliness in relationship to God. Malony sees the prime issues here being reverence versus idolatry. This category asks questions "designed to assess persons' attitude toward God, their sense of dependence on God, their sense of creatureliness, their use of worship, and their use of prayer."²⁴ He writes, "mature persons express awareness of their dependence upon the Creator, but also recognize their capabilities, . . . show humility, . . . worship God as an expression of reverence and of love, . . . (and) pray as a means of spiritual sustenance and communion

²⁴ Malony, "Clinical Assessment of Optimal Religious Functioning," 8.

with God.”²⁵ An example of a question in this dimension is #13, which reads “Both prayer and personal action are needed to deal with difficult problems. One without the other is insufficient.” Another example is #22, “I feel a desire to worship God throughout the week.” Persons more religiously mature would rate themselves toward the higher end of the scale for both these questions, revealing that they recognize the complexity of problems and avenues of faithful solutions, and the inherent yearning they have to give expression to their awe of God.

The second dimension is “Acceptance of God’s Grace and Steadfast Love.” This is the degree to which people experience God’s love as benevolent and unconditional. The prime issues are trust and a sense of providence versus exaggerated independence and hopelessness. This category’s questions are “designed to assess persons’ view of God’s love, their response to God’s love, their appreciation for the love of God, and their ability to find personal meaning in the midst of life’s problems.”²⁶ “Mature persons” Malony writes, “use God’s love and forgiveness as an impetus for new life and responsible action, . . . manifest this through a sense of joy and gratitude, . . . (and) find meaning in the suffering and difficulties of life.”²⁷ Examples of questions in this dimension are #46, “Receiving God’s forgiveness inspires me to worship and praise God,” and #119, “Suffering seems to develop and refine my faith and character.” Both of these questions probe this dimension of the acceptance of God’s grace, by focusing on persons’ understanding of forgiveness and suffering. The more religiously mature persons would respond

²⁵ Malony, “Assessing Religious Maturity,” 31.

²⁶ Malony, “Clinical Assessment of Optimal Religious Functioning,” 8.

²⁷ Malony, “Assessing Religious Maturity,” 31.

that these statements were “more so” like them rather than “less so.”

The third dimension is “Being Repentant and Responsible.” This category explores the degree to which persons take responsibility for their own feelings and behaviors with prime issues pertaining to redemption, justification, forgiveness, and change versus lack of awareness, bitterness, and vindictiveness. The questions that probe this dimension are “designed to assess persons’ sense of what causes problems in their lives, their acceptance of their feelings, their motivation for repentance, and their asking for and granting forgiveness.”²⁸ As Malony imagines what maturity would look like in this area, he writes that “mature persons accurately accept personal responsibility without denying other factors, such as the environment, in personal difficulties and in sin, . . . have attitudes toward repentance based on constructive sorrow, . . . are aware of their inner impulses and accept them, . . . (and) are able to request and accept forgiveness . . . without experiencing continued resentment.”²⁹ A good example of a question in this dimension is #68 which reads “The causes of my problems include both myself and my surroundings.” The religiously mature person would tend to agree with this statement. Another question seeks to reveal persons’ maturity in repenting over hurtful actions and seeking a remedy. It is #124, “When I have hurt someone I try to ask myself what I can do to make it right.”

The fourth dimension measuring religious maturity is called “Knowing God’s Leadership and Direction.” This is the degree to which persons trust in, hope for, and live out God’s direction in their lives. Issues that are involved here are faith versus despair. Questions in this category are “designed to assess

²⁸ Malony, “Clinical Assessment of Optimal Religious Functioning,” 9.

²⁹ Malony, “Assessing Religious Maturity,” 31.

persons' trust in God's leadership, their sense of hope, and their role identity."³⁰ Mature persons are characterized through this dimension as people who "express trust in God's leadership for life yet also recognize their role, . . . express an optimistic, yet realistic, hope, . . . are confident, . . . (and) have a positive sense of role identity that provides meaning."³¹ These two questions are among the twenty that try to get at this aspect of faith: #6, "I pray for help in my decisions rather than ask for specific answers," and #57, "I expect some hard times in the future but trust that God will help me through them." It is believed that more religiously mature persons would see themselves described "more so" in these two statements. They would be people who pray for help, not answers, and trust in God for the future.

The fifth dimension is "Involvement in Organized Religion." This dimension explores the degree to which persons are involved quantitatively, qualitatively, and motivationally in the church, with issues of commitment versus isolation and association versus aloneness. Questions designed for this category "assess persons' level of involvement, the activity or passivity of their involvement, their commitment through financial giving, and the reasons for their involvement."³² Malony writes that "mature persons experience regular weekly involvement with others in religious worship, prayer, study, and service, . . . evidence active involvement and commitment to religious activities, . . . (and) are involved in church or in a religious group as an index of their desire to grow

³⁰ Malony, "Clinical Assessment of Optimal Religious Functioning," 9.

³¹ Malony, "Assessing Religious Maturity," 31.

³² Malony, "Clinical Assessment of Optimal Religious Functioning," 9.

in their faith.”³³ Statement #4 reads “I regularly attend church or a religious community,” and #128 reads “I need to be more involved in church than just being a member.” Both these statements explore the person’s involvement in their religious community and give them an opportunity to register it. The more mature persons are more active than less active.

The sixth category used for measuring religious maturity is called “Experiencing Fellowship” and it is set up to examine the degree to which persons relate to and have a sense of interpersonal identity. The issues involved here refer to communion with others versus self-centeredness and pride. Questions in this dimension are “designed to assess persons’ sense of intimacy with other Christians, their identification of themselves as children of God, and their identification with all humanity.”³⁴ When considering maturity in terms of this category, Malony writes “mature persons experience relationships at various levels of intimacy, . . . identify positively with the family of God and have a sense of community with other believing persons, . . . (and) have a sense of commonality with all of God’s creatures and with God’s creation.”³⁵ The persons reveal their religious maturity in terms of this dimension by indicating that the following statements are like them: #59, “I feel a common bond with other Christians,” and #152, “Talking to people from different cultures helps me to have a broader view of life.”

The seventh dimension is “Being Ethical.” It examines the degree to which people are flexible in and committed to the application of ethical principles to their lives. It pertains to a sense of vocation and the living of life by

³³ Malony, “Assessing Religious Maturity,” 31.

³⁴ Malony, “Clinical Assessment of Optimal Religious Functioning,” 10.

³⁵ Malony, “Assessing Religious Maturity,” 31-32.

values versus a loss of meaning and no feeling of oughtness. The questions that were shaped for this dimension were “designed to assess persons’ investment in being ethical, their relating their faith to ethical issues, their emphasis on social as well as personal ethics, and their concern to serve others through their vocations.”³⁶ When considering the qualities of a religiously mature person in regards to this dimension, Malony writes “mature persons follow their ethical principles in a flexible but committed manner, . . . (have a) faith (that) underlies and guides their behavior, . . . show a concern for personal and social ethics, . . . are concerned about individual responsibility and social justice, . . . (and) sense they are serving others through their work or vocation.”³⁷ Statement #21, “I make most of my decisions based on the idea that I should do to others what I want them to do to me,” and statement #44, “I feel good about what I do because I know I am contributing to society,” both speak to this dimension on ethics and social concern. It is expected that the more religiously mature persons would be people who think of the affect of their actions upon others and take a pride in knowing their actions help others.

The eighth and last dimension used to assess religious maturity that Malony added to those that arose from Pruyser’s work is “Affirming Openness in Faith.” This looks at the degree to which persons are growing, elaborating, and being open to newness in their faith. The issues that are involved here refer to humility and interest in changing versus closed-mindedness and authoritarianism. The questions designed to explore this category “assess persons incorporating faith into the center of their lives, their growth in faith, their openness to divergent viewpoints, and increase in the dimensions and

³⁶ Malony, “Clinical Assessment of Optimal Religious Functioning,” 10.

³⁷ Malony, “Assessing Religious Maturity,” 32.

applications of their faith.”³⁸ Malony writes, “while expressing confidence in their own view, mature persons show a tolerance for other viewpoints and evidence a willingness to examine others’ beliefs in an honest manner.”³⁹ Two questions used by Malony to surface qualities of this dimension of faith maturity are #19, “There are a lot of different parts of my faith I want to explore,” and #141, “I am comfortable with other people believing differently than I.” He expects religiously mature persons to have such a comfort level with diverse beliefs, while also desiring to further explore their own faith in greater detail or breadth.

The seven factors are similar to the eight dimensions. They function in the same fashion as the dimensions and are scored in a similar manner. The seven-factor analysis was added to the RSI scoring methodology to broaden the approach of establishing a person’s faith maturity while cross-testing its accuracy.

One of the clear strengths of Malony’s Religious Status Inventory is that it does not hesitate in bringing attention to a person’s involvement in the body of Christ as it is auditing the person’s faith expressions. Stewardship, leadership, service, and participation in a congregation of believers are highlighted as indicators of a growing level of discipleship and a maturing spirituality. Malony stresses how difficult it would be to measure one’s faithfulness, but recognizes it is possible to measure one’s “application of faith to life,” a person’s “functional theology,” and expects that expression of faith to be connected with the church. This is the key to the usefulness and appropriateness of this instrument in general and for this study’s ecclesiastical connection.

³⁸ Malony, “Clinical Assessment of Optimal Religious Functioning,” 11.

³⁹ Malony, “Assessing Religious Maturity,” 32.

The Religious Status Inventory attempts to look at outward manifestations of inward values, attitudes, and beliefs. In this respect, it also rests well upon Wesleyan thought that stresses practical theology, the living out of belief rather than just the assent to belief. The Wesleyan movement is grounded upon this premise that the fruits of piety are mercy, that those outward behaviors which translate a person's beliefs into the actions of life are the proper manifestation of faith. Roger's theological insights highlighted in his third movement of the Spirit seem to find a connection here as well. Vocation is spirituality outwardly directed and expressed, manifestations of the faith that would be noticeable and potentially measurable. It is in this way that we can see evidence of one's developing faith and garner a sense of one's spiritual maturity.

There are a few liabilities in the RSI. First is the concern over the lack of attention to the respondent's bodily well-being in the RSI. Positing a holistic concept of spirituality, it is important for examination to be made of how one's physical health supports or distracts from one's spiritual growth and emerging faithful discipleship. Suffering and disability have oftentimes been seen as challenges to a person's faith or as opportunities to build the character of one's faith, yet it is more than this that is of concern. If one does not factor in a person's physicality into the mix of who the person is and how the person grows spiritually, one is missing a foundational point of what spirituality is to people. Without the body, one would not experience the spirit on this plane of life. A spirituality that is not adequately rooted in physical reality is likely to float off into the nebulas, detached from the real flesh-and-blood reality of human life and our ecological context. To compensate for the omission in the RSI of physicality, a few questions were added to the questionnaire in the form of the cover sheet demographics that inquire into the participant's health and body

awareness.

Another limitation of the RSI has to do with the observation that growth toward spiritual maturity can be occasioned by traumatic and unpleasant experiences as well as comfortable and positive experiences. Experiencing the death of a loved one, a life-threatening disease, divorce, or prejudice and hatred are all unpleasant experiences of a destructive nature, yet they can be experiences that lead toward spiritual growth, if handled well. In fact, there is a theological tradition in the church that posits God as the author of these terrible events in a people's lives, done by God for the very purpose of refining the soul and building the character of believers. While such doctrine is not the theological position of the author, other theological perspectives understand hardship and trauma in believers' lives as opportunities for those believers to grow in their faith. The destructive experience may not be from the hand of God but the redemption of the experience for "a good" if credited to God's nurturing, comforting, and edifying presence, and the Lord's resurrection power. It is unclear how the RSI measures the "walk through the valley of the shadow," as it assesses faith maturity. Clearly, a comprehensive measure of maturity must take into account experiences such as these and people's responses to them.

Though not unique to the RSI, one additional limitation must be mentioned. Any instrument that uses self-rating suffers the potential problem of inflated answers by the respondents. Internal checks among questions are provided to help identify such situations, yet they are inadequate for catching a consistent self-engrandizer or the consistent self-degrader. Scores of all participants in a study using the RSI must be understood in light of this basic caveat.

In Appendix A are the cover sheet questionnaires and the RSI used for

this study. They are presented as Figures 3-8. The administration of the study and its results are covered in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5

STUDY OF SMALL GROUPS AT FIRST CHURCH

Setting Up the Study

Purpose

The purpose of the field study is to assess the effectiveness in a local church setting of a variety of small groups in aiding the spiritual growth of participants toward more faithful discipleship and spiritual maturity.

Context

The context of the study is First United Methodist Church of Ventura. The congregation is over 130 years old, being the first Protestant congregation in this Channel Island beach community of 90,000 people which is located equidistant between Los Angeles and Santa Barbara. (The San Buenaventura Mission is the oldest congregation in town.) As the community has grown, the congregation has built and moved three times, though remained in the general “downtown/midtown” sections of Ventura. This location places the church close to the government, commercial, and tourist areas of town. The current church facility was dedicated in the 1920s, and added to and renovated twice in recent decades. It shares a parking lot with one of the community’s middle schools, is five minutes from the beach, and surrounded by aging and transitional neighborhoods.

The congregation has approximately 600 adult members. About 5% are non-Anglo, coming from Asian, African-American, and Hispanic backgrounds. The congregation is economically comfortable, with many of the members having pursued or now pursuing professional careers. While the age median is dropping in the congregation, a majority of its members are retired or near

retirement age. The next largest age group would be the age ranger for “Boomers” who are bringing their children and now stretching the size of the Sunday School. Politically and theologically, the congregation seems to be moderate, neither strongly conservative nor overly liberal. They pride themselves on annually meeting their financial responsibilities in the denomination, actively participating in many social concern projects of the local area, being a center for musical events in the community, and having a warm and welcoming attitude toward visitors.

The congregation was much larger during the post-war years, yet it rarely refers back to those days as the irretrievable “golden years” as do many downtown first churches. It is not living in the past and seems to recognize a challenging and promising future. Its programmatic vitality has ebbed and flowed over the years and now seems to be rising to another period of activity. The church has engaged in a long range planning process called “Vision 2000” which has generated some excitement over the church’s future mission and ministries.

Time Frame

During Lent 1998, congregants were exposed to the five different types of small group experiences that were to be studied. One experience was presented each week during the Thursday evening Lenten Study, with an opportunity for the participants to sample its methodology. Then, in the days surrounding Easter, the participants were given the opportunity to choose a particular type of small group in which to participate for the next 8 weeks. The study concluded in mid-June. The publicity used to generate interest and participation in the study is presented in Appendix A as Figures 9-13.

Types of Small Groups

For the study, a variety of small groups was used, so that the participants' experiences among the groups would be significantly different. To this end, the following groups, described in chapter 2, were used:

Guided Imagery - a prayer group in which verbal suggestions are used to stimulate its members' awareness and thoughts.

Lectio Divina - a Bible study group which uses a contemplative approach to discerning the meaning of the scripture.

Covenant Discipleship - an encounter group modeled upon Wesley's Class Meetings which stresses mutual sharing and accountability among group members for growth.

Talk Walkers - a service group that engages in a good deed of physical service to others without compensation each week.

Praying the Office - a worship group centered about this type of traditional and occasional worship.

Testing and Measurements

The study called for the participants of the groups to take a pretest and a post-test to provide information on changes during the study period. The instrument used was "The Religious Status Inventory" by H. Newton Maloney. This 160-question battery was supplemented at the pretest time by a small set of basic demographic questions to help provide a better definition of the participants. At the post-test time the RSI was supplemented with additional open-ended questions that provided the participants an opportunity to further round-out their spiritual self-evaluation. The RSI was scored by Maloney and the author using Maloney's office's computer based scoring program. This data was then statistically analyzed by Jeanelle Folbrecht, a psychologist trained by

Maloney and familiar with the RSI. Her statistical tabulations were then reviewed and analyzed by the author for results of the field study. The results were shared with the participants, with an opportunity given for participants to further pursue their results in private consultation with the author.

Schedule and Arrangements

There were interesting and significant congregational experiences bracketing the Lenten Series and setting the stage for the field study which should be mentioned. Most if not all the participants were present in these other experiences.

The Lenten Series was kicked-off with an Ash Wednesday Service on February 25, 1998 and was concluded by the activities of Holy Week. These concluding activities began with the Palm Sunday Services on April 5th, and were followed by the Maundy Thursday Communion Service, the Good Friday Chancel Choir Concert of Gabriel Faure's *Requiem*, a Prayer Vigil from Good Friday to Holy Saturday, a Walking of the Labyrinth available from Good Friday to Holy Saturday, and our Easter Sunday Services on April 12th.

The Lenten Series provided the potential pool of field study participants an introductory presentation and experience of each different type of small group that would be used in the study. The general schedule for this series was a potluck hosted by one of our church committees from 5:45 to 6:30 p.m. in the fellowship hall, followed by the program from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. There were four segments to the program: (1) an informational introduction to the particular type of group; (2) a large group experience of the particular type of small group; (3) a processing of experience in triads; and (4) sharing in the large group of any general questions or interesting observations by the triads. The evening was then completed with a brief blessing and dismissal.

The particular arrangements of the series were as follows. Session 1 was on March 5th and focused on Guided Imagery. The author was the presenter and the Worship Commission hosted the potluck. Session 2 was on March 12th and focused on Lectio Divina. Amy Aitken, who is one of the associate pastors at First Church and has had personal experience with Lectio, was the presenter and the Education Commission hosted the potluck. Session 3 was on March 19th and focused on Covenant Discipleship. Phyllis Tyler, a neighboring UM pastor and national leader in our denomination on covenant discipleship groups, was the presenter and the Evangelism Commission hosted the potluck. Session 4 was on March 26th and focused on Talk Walking. Rick Pearson, another associate pastor at First Church who serves beyond the local church in a social service agency, was the presenter and the Outreach Commission hosted the potluck. Session 5 was on April 2nd and focused on Praying the Office. Amy Aitken and the author were the presenters and the Membership Commission hosted the potluck.

Attendance for the series varied between 50 and 90 people. Comments were very positive about the series with people enjoying it simply for the experience and exposure. Some people were old-hands at small groups and, though not being exposed to anything radically new to them, still appreciated the experience. Others were exposed to a certain type of small group for the first time. While some were very excited over this exposure and expressed an interest in participating in a particular small group, others recognized in their exposure a type of small group experience they would want to avoid.

The Lenten Series was followed by a two week period of transition to the field study itself. This was used as a registration time for participants to determine the small group of their choice. This registration time began with a

general sign-up after Lenten Series #6. Most people registered at this time. These participants were immediately gathered and aided in reaching a consensus on meeting dates and times. Other participants responded later to the publicity shared during Holy Week, which included announcements, bulletin and newsletter articles, and posters on tripods and walls around the church campus.

Conducting the Study

Scope and General Plan

The study ran for eight weeks, beginning the week of Sunday, April 19th and concluding the week of Sunday, June 7th. There was one session each of these weeks that was approximately one hour in length. The participants were reminded of their group selection and the meeting arrangements prior to the first session. Unless otherwise necessitated, the sessions occurred at church in a room set up to accommodate the experience of the group. While initial thoughts were to have the Lenten presenter of each group experience be the small group leader, it was later decided that the author would run each small group, helping make consistent the leadership effect upon the small group experience.

Participants' Understanding of the Study

A variety of people decided to participate in the eight week small group experience. Initial hopes were for each small group to have 8 to 10 participants. Regrettably, this hope was not realized. Only 22 people enrolled in the study, yet they were an eager and cooperative collection of people. The author shared with all the participants that their participation and the RSI testing was part of the author's D.Min. research project on "spiritual growth through small groups." It is uncertain how this information may have affected the study. Perhaps the knowledge that the process was part of a study limited the number

of participants who chose to be in the small groups after their initial exposure to the groups through the Lenten experience. In any case, it is expected that those who chose to be in the study used this information motivationally to encourage better participation on their parts in the small groups. In addition, it should be noted that they were advised that the RSI scores would be kept anonymous as they were used in the research and later shared with each participant for their self-understanding and potential benefit.

Record Keeping

A file was kept for each group which was updated after each group's session. In this file I recorded attendance, plans for the session and what actually happened in the session, and any issues or concerns that surfaced from the participants.

Schedule, Setting, and Attendance

The Guided Imagery Group. The Guided Imagery Group decided to meet on Fridays, from 9:00 -10:00 a.m. This meeting day was altered due to a participant's work schedule on three occasions, twice to Wednesdays and once to a Thursday. With these adjustments, the time for the group sessions worked well. The group met in the author's office, which is large enough to have a couch and a couple comfortable chairs to make conversation relaxed and less formal. For this group experience, the participants lounged on the couch to aid their relaxed imaginative process.

Two people signed up for this group. Both were women, one an elderly long time member, the other a younger woman who has been a member for less than a decade. The younger woman missed one session, otherwise attendance was perfect.

The Lectio Divina Group. The Lectio Divina group met on Wednesdays,

from 6:00 -7:00 p.m. This time and day seemed to work well for the participants. The group met in the author's office, sitting on the couch and two comfortable chairs. On one occasion the location was changed to meet in one of the couple's home, due to a recovering illness on their part. Both locations supported the group's needs of being comfortable yet alert to read and meditate on scripture.

Four people joined this small group. They were two married couples, both in their 60's who had been long-time members of the church. One couple missed two sessions due to illness, the other couple missed a session also missed by the first couple.

The Covenant Discipleship Group. Since more people registered for the Covenant Discipleship type of small group than is recommended for a good group size, these participants were asked to divide themselves into two groups. The groups were then designated group A and group B for easy reference.

The Covenant Discipleship A group met on Tuesdays, from 6:00 -7:00 p.m. The group met in an adult class room of the church that is called The Upper Room. It is a large room on the second floor of the fellowship building with windows that overlook the coast. It has a pleasant though typical classroom atmosphere. The room is set with comfortable straight backed chairs that were put in a circle for the sessions. Off to a side wall but incorporated into the circle was a small table with cloth covering, lighted candle, and cross.

The first group had five members. There was a clergy and his wife who are associated with our church and are in their forties. Another couple, newly married, was involved, who are new constituents to our church and attend occasionally. They are also in their forties. The fifth person is a single female, long-time member, at retirement age. The newly married couple missed once,

the husband of the other couple missed once due to illness, and the single woman missed four sessions to care for and then bury her mother.

The Covenant Discipleship B group chose to meet on Thursdays, 5:45-7:00 p.m. It met fifteen minutes earlier than the other covenant discipleship group because this group chose to take communion together as part of their process prior to starting their weekly sessions. The other covenant discipleship group had chosen not to do communion. The author served as the officiant. The group met in The Upper Room, set up the same way as it was for the other group.

This second group was composed of four people. One couple was retirement age and long-time members, and the other couple was in their fifties and members of the church for a couple of decades. Both couples missed once due to travel plans and the wife of one of the couples missed two other times.

The Talk Walkers Group. The Talk Walkers group met on Wednesdays, at various times and in various places depending on the type of service opportunity. These opportunities ranged from feeding the hungry, to doing housecleaning, to providing child-care. The author arranged the service activity and contacted each group participant to alert them to the time and place, negotiating these variables with the participants when needed to assure better attendance.

The original enrollment of five dropped to three when an elderly couple better understood the rigors of the group and withdrew before we had our first session. The three remaining people included a couple of retirement age who were members for a half decade at the church and a woman in her fifties who is a friend of our church but a member of the other United Methodist Church in town. The couple missed one time due to travel and the husband missed two

additional times due to work.

The Praying the Office Group. The Praying the Office group met on Thursdays, from 7:00 - 8:00 p.m. This was a good time that did not change during the eight week study duration. The group met in the chancel area of the Chapel, the church's smaller worship space. We sat in straight back chairs arranged in a circle in front of the altar which had a cross and two lighted candles.

This group was initially composed of four women. There was a divorced mother in her forties and her teenage daughter, both of whom had recently joined the church, and two married women who attended without their spouses, one, an elderly long-time church member, and the other a long-time church member in her forties. The teenage daughter never attended the group. Her mother missed twice. The elderly woman had travel plans that could not be changed and as a result missed five of the sessions. The other woman made all the sessions.

Group Formats

The Guided Imagery Group. The Guided Imagery Group began with a welcoming and casual friendly conversation of the day. The imagery exercise of the day was then introduced, the participants invited to get comfortable and close their eyes. The author began each exercise with a guided imagery deep relaxation time, and then once there, led the participants through a particular exercise. The exercises used were taken from two resources, one was Carolyn Stahl's *Opening to God: Guided Imagery Meditation on Scripture*¹ and the other was Martin L. Rossman's *Healing Yourself*.²

¹ Carolyn Stahl, *Opening to God: Guided Imagery Meditation on Scripture* (Nashville: Upper Room, 1977).

² Martin L. Rossman, *Healing Yourself* (New York: Pocket Books, 1989).

In session one, the process was overviewed with permission given to participate to the extent that they felt comfortable. Rossman's "Basic Relaxation" was used in this session to start the participants on their way to learning how to relax and get deep within themselves. In session two, Rossman's "Deepening Technique" script was used. The participants were responding well to the guided imagery and laying a good relaxation foundation for the work ahead. In session three, Rossman's "Healing Imagery" script was used. In session four, the author moved into the Stahl book and used her "Exercise #4" based on the parable of the sower scattering seeds on different soils. In session five, Stahl's "Exercise #7" was used with its focus on forgiving and forgiveness. In session six, one participant was absent and the time was used to respond to questions of the other group member about fundamentalism and the New Age movement. In session seven, Stahl's "Exercise #15" based on the scripture passage about vines and branches was used. In the last session, session eight, "Exercise #14" from Stahl was used, which was a guided imagery on the text of Mary and Martha.

When the imagery time was completed, the author brought the participants back into present time and place, and after a moment or two of gathering our senses, the participants were invited to share their experience. One time they were asked to describe their experience with a drawing, the other times they processed the experience verbally. After the sharing time was completed the participants were sent on their way with a quick blessing.

The Lectio Divina Group. The Lectio Divina Group began with a welcome, casual conversation and a settling into the task at hand. A group Lectio format articulated by Norvene Vest in her 1996 book entitled *Gathering in*

the Word was followed.³ The participants were invited to prepare for the Lectio by getting comfortable, closing their eyes, and centering themselves upon God's present Spirit. After a few moments, the scripture passage of the day was distributed, so that they could read it as well as hear it throughout our exercise.

For the scriptures, the author chose to work out of Matthew, with a series of parables and "the Kingdom of God is like" passages. I thought these passages which are rich in imagery would be helpful to the participants as they sought to discern a word of God for themselves. Session one was a missed session. Session two used Matthew 13:3b-8, the parable of the sower. Session three used Matthew 13:24-30, the parable of the weeds in the wheat. Session four used Matthew 13:31-32, the mustard seed. Session five used Matthew 13:33, a brief verse on the Kingdom being like yeast. Session six used Matthew 13:44-46, which highlights the hidden treasure and the pearl as helpful images to understanding the Kingdom. Session seven used Matthew 13:47-50, which states the Kingdom of God is like a net. Session eight used Matthew 20:1-16, the parable of the laborers in the vineyard.

The author spoke the scripture and invited the participants to listen for a word or phrase that attracted them. After some silence, they were invited to share that word without elaboration. This was a hard task for them to share only one word. Then, the scripture was read again, and again the participants were invited to listen to discover how this passage touched their lives that day. After some silence, the author invited the group to share what they noticed in a brief sentence or two, beginning with "I see" or "I hear" or "I sense." The group was able to do this fairly well, in that they were now allowed a little time of elaboration. Then the author voiced the scripture a third time, this time with the

³ Norvene Vest, *Gathered in the Word: Praying the Scripture in Small Groups* (Nashville: Upper Room Books, 1996).

invitation to listen to discover a possible invitation relevant to their near future. After some silence, the group was invited to share their discovered invitation. This was done without much difficulty. The author followed this time of sharing with a time of prayer to give closure to our experience, in which each participant had the opportunity to pray silently or aloud as we went around the circle. They then were bid farewell with a blessing.

The Covenant Discipleship Groups. The Covenant Discipleship Groups A and B each met at their first session to review the mechanics of the group process and to determine their group's covenant. A copy of each groups' covenant can be found in Appendix A labeled Figures 14 and 15.

The covenants began and ended with a standard text. Between this opening and closing were the clauses each group determined to follow and to hold each other accountable through weekly reporting to the group. Each covenant was basically the same with clauses about prayer, Bible reading, worship attendance, stewardship, service to others, environmentalism, and bodily health. The significant difference between the two groups was that group B wanted to have communion each week at the start of their session, while A did not want this. So for group B, the author prepared the elements and had them positioned on the table in the room. The brief liturgy in the *United Methodist Book of Worship*⁴ was used and the elements were served by moving around the circle. Besides the communion, the group format was basically the same.

We would have casual conversation until all the participants were present. An opening prayer was followed by a reading of the covenant. Then the author would ask each participant, one at a time, to report on how he or she

⁴ United Methodist Church (U.S.), *The United Methodist Book of Worship* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1992).

had done with a clause of the covenant. The author would say something like, "How has it gone for you this week with this clause of the covenant?" People would respond at the level of disclosure and thoroughness with which they felt comfortable. The author engaged their answers with a follow up question or comment, only if it was clearly solicited by the participant. For each clause we went around the circle, though we started with a different person for each clause. Depending on the length of the responses, sometimes the reporting was completed on the whole covenant at a session while other times only part of the covenant was covered. When the review was completed or the allowed time had expired, the session closed with a circle prayer and a blessing.

The Talk Walkers Group. The Talk Walkers Group began with a welcome and casual conversation until all had gathered. Instructions were given on how to perform the chosen service activity. It then was performed with easy-going conversation among all the participants until the work was completed. At times, the conversation focused on something related to the activity, like homelessness, poverty, or child-rearing. At other times, it ranged beyond the task at hand to family concerns or the weather.

Session One was a two hour experience serving a free lunch to about 350 needy people. Session Two was a two hour experience of cleaning up trash at our local beach. Session Three was a two-hour period of baby sitting for a church family with triplets. Session Four was another turn at serving a free lunch to about 250 poor people. Session Five was a two-hour period of church work, setting up for a big event in the fellowship hall and washing windows in our parlor. Session Six had the group doing much of the difficult behind the scenes work of our church rummage sale. Session Seven was a two hour stint of doing housework for an infirm elderly friend of one of our participants.

Session Eight was a morning of food pantry work at a local agency in which we sorted canned goods, bagged rice and beans for easier distribution, and gave out grocery bags of food to poor people.

Once our activity was completed, the participants briefly and informally shared with one another how they felt about what they had just done. There was always a general sense of satisfaction about the experience, though on most occasions the participants felt a bit worn out. A dismissal blessing ended the experience.

The Praying the Office Group. The Praying the Office Group began with a welcome and casual conversation in the meeting area until all were gathered. The author led the group, then, in the liturgy for Evening Prayer and Praise as found in the *United Methodist Hymnal*.⁵ An opening hymn was sung a capella, the lectionary Psalm selection was used as our scripture, and a unison sharing was enjoyed each week of the "Canticle of Hope" as found in the Hymnal, page 734.

In Session One the group used "Precious Lord" and Psalm 30. Session Two used "Be Thou My Vision" and Psalm 24. Session Three used "Great Is Thou Faithfulness" and Psalm 148. Session Four used "Amazing Grace" and Psalm 67. Session Five used "Have Thine Own Way, Lord" and Psalm 97. Session Six used "Rock of Ages" and Psalm 104. Session Seven used "Softly and Tenderly Jesus is Calling" and Psalm 8. Session Eight used "Blessed Assurance" and Psalm 5:1-8.

Following this segment of the worship time the group moved into the liturgy's prayer time. Much of the allotted hour seemed to be absorbed by the participants' use of this prayer litany. The sessions were concluded with a

⁵ United Methodist Church (U.S.), *The United Methodist Hymnal* (Nashville: United Methodist Publishing House, 1989), 878.

closing blessing.

Tabulating the Study

Testing

Each participant self-administered a RSI with supplemental questions as a pretest, prior to the first session, and as a post-test, after the last session. They mailed or submitted their completed IBM answer sheets and the supplemental answer sheets to the author at church, where they were collated and readied for scoring.

Scoring and Tabulation

The raw data was scored by Maloney and the author at his office. His computer has a program specifically created to score the RSIs. These scores were then forwarded to Folbrecht for statistical analysis. Over the next year's time, the author reviewed and processed the statistical analysis, searching for results to the study for this project, and reported to the participants the results of their participation in the study. Individual follow-up was offered but not requested.

Study Results

Participant Demographics

Twenty-five people responded to the invitation for the small group study by signing up to participate. Three of these participants withdrew before the study's first session and did not submit the pretest RSI. The following tables provides some basic descriptive and statistical information about these remaining twenty-two participants. The first looks at the gender breakdown of the participants, showing that twice as many females participated as males.

Table 1
Gender of Participants

<u>Gender</u>	<u>Participants</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Males	7	(32%)
Females	15	(68%)

The second table looks at the marital status of the participants and shows that an overwhelming majority of participants were married.

Table 2
Marital Status of Participants

<u>Marital Status</u>	<u>Participants</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Single	1	(5%)
Married	20	(91%)
Divorced	1	(5%)
Widowed	0	(0%)

It is interesting that this study predominantly attracted married females, since its publicity was not presented with a bias to this demographic group. This may represent the general make up of the church more than anything else, though it may also indicate that married women are indeed more interested in these types of small group experiences.

Additional questions were added to the RSI pretest to provide more information about the participants' faith and church membership. The participants responded as follows.

Table 3
Years Christian of Participants

<u>Years Christian</u>	<u>Participants</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Five to Nine	1	(5%)
Ten to Twenty-four	2	(9%)
Twenty-five to Forty-nine	9	(41%)
Fifty to Above	10	(45%)

Nearly all the participants (86%) have considered themselves Christian for over twenty-five years, with half of those participants having indicated a Christian identity for at least 50 years. Clearly, the bulk of the participants were not new to the faith, but had been believers for decades. The newest believers among the participants had been Christian for five to nine years. This might rightly imply that the participants have been under the influence of Christ for years and may be more developed in their faith than would be a new believer.

Table 4
Years Methodist of Participants

<u>Years Methodist</u>	<u>Participants</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Zero to Four	5	(23%)
Five to Nine	0	(0%)
Ten to Twenty-four	2	(9%)
Twenty-five to Forty-nine	10	(45%)
Fifty and Above	5	(23%)

A significant number of participants also have been long time Methodists, with 68% reporting that they have belonged to Methodist churches for more than twenty-five years. When the participants in the next group are added, the

total grows to 77% of the participants having considered themselves Methodist for at least ten years. The remaining participants were relatively new to the denomination. This denominational affiliation implies a working knowledge of things Methodist and perhaps even a predisposition to the styles and traditions of the denomination. This might predispose the participants to appreciating a small group like the Covenant Discipleship group which has a Methodist history, while feeling on uncertain terrain in the Lectio Divina group which is not a typical Methodist small group.

Table 5
Years Members of First Church of Participants

<u>Years Members</u>	<u>Participants</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Zero to Four	6	(27%)
Five to Nine	3	(14%)
Ten to Twenty-four	3	(14%)
Twenty-five to Forty-nine	10	(45%)
Fifty and Above	0	(0%)

The local church membership question shows a little more variety among the participants. While 45% of the participants have been members of First Church for over twenty-five years, a sizable 27% of the participants are relatively new to this local church. The remaining 28% is equally divided between the remaining two categories of membership length. It would be anticipated that this diversity in length of church membership might evidence itself in some fashion upon the study participants. Longer tenured members might feel a greater openness to participate in a service activity, since such service activities are integral to the identity of this local congregation, while for

newer members this might seem unusual.

The participants filled the ranks of five styles of small groups. The Covenant Discipleship small group was split into two groups because of the suggested size limitation for these groups. By their registration choices, the participants were divided among the small groups as follows.

Table 6
Small Group Registration of Participants

<u>Groups</u>	<u>Participants</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Talk Walkers	3	(14%)
Covenant Discipleship	9	(41%)
A - 5 (23%)		
B - 4 (18%)		
Lectio Divina	4	(18%)
Praying the Office	3	(14%)
Guided Imagery	2	(9%)
All Groups (study leader)	1	(5%)

It was heartening to see registrations for all the groups. Because of the attendance at the Lenten Series, it was hoped that the number of registrants for the small groups would be higher. Unfortunately, it was not. While this small number of participants undoubtedly compromised the scientific value of the study, it did not impede the participants from having a valuable experience. Each of the groups were able to function properly with the number of participants.

Statistical Analysis

The raw data from the pretests and the post tests were compared and analyzed in terms of the demographic information and the various types of small

groups. The assumptions and the hypotheses of the study were put to the test. This section reports the findings.

The statistical analysis reported that none of the demographic qualities of gender, marital status, years as Christian, years as United Methodist, or years as First Church member could be connected at a statistically significant level to any change the participants reported in their faith maturity. The initial hypothesis of this influence went unfounded.

Similarly, the statistical analysis reported that none of the small groups could be considered responsible to a statistically significant level for any changed the participants reported in their faith maturity. The hope of tracking this influence has gone unfilled.

A number of analyses were applied to the data looking to document the influence of the demographics upon changes in the RSI scores. First, the overall relationship between the total RSI score and the demographic variables were tested using an "Hierarchical Analysis of Variance." The result was not significant at "P" or the probability of chance, .5 (50%). Secondly, the overall relationship between the RSI factor scores and the demographic variables was tested using an "Hierarchical Multivariate Analysis of Variance." Again the result was not significant at P. Third, the overall relationship between the RSI dimension scores and the demographic variables was tested using an "Hierarchical Multivariate Analysis of Variance." The result was not significant at P for this analysis also. Fourth, the overall relationship between the added variables of church activity, health description, and physical attentiveness attached to the RSI and the demographic variables was tested using an "Hierarchical Multivariate Analysis of Variance." The result was not significant at P once again.

An equal number of analyses were applied to the data looking to document the influence of the type of small group upon any changes in the RSI scores. First, the difference among the groups on the total RSI difference score was examined using an Analysis of Variance or ANOVA. The findings were not significant ($p=.2$) which meant there was not a significant difference among the various groups in terms of RSI difference score. Second, the difference among the groups on the RSI factor difference score was examined using a Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA). There was not a significant difference among the groups on the RSI factor difference score. Third, the difference among the groups on the RSI dimension score was examined using MANOVA. There was not a significant difference among the groups of the RSI dimension score. Fourth, the difference among the groups on the difference score for the added variables of church activity, health description, and physical attentiveness was examined using MANOVA. There was not a significant difference among the groups on the difference score.

Appendix B presents the individual computer scoring sheets of each participant and the summary computer score sheet of the overall scores of all participants taken together, in terms of the the RSI factors and dimensions and the additional supplemental questions. It lists means, standard deviations, and ranges for the pretest, post test, and difference. Using the standard deviation, it is possible to see if a participant's individual score, overall or for a particular item, might be significant. When the standard deviation is added and subtracted from the mean, a range is created within which a participant's score would be considered typical, relative to the other participants in this study. If the participant's score is beyond this mean range, then it attracts notice as possibly significant for this particular participant relative to the other participants of the

study.

Looking at this graph, the “pretest standard deviation” or 60.71 is applied to the “pretest mean score” or 630.91 and a “pretest standard deviation range” is produced. It is 570.20 to 691.62. When this range is applied to each participant’s RSI pretest total score, four participants are seen to be one standard deviation below the mean and three participants are seen to be one standard deviation above the mean at this pretest time. This math then is applied to the post test. The “post test standard deviation” or 83.55 is applied to the “post test mean score” or 630.05 and a “post test standard deviation range” is produced of 546.40 to 713.60. All but one of these earlier noticed participants who were beyond the standard deviation in the pretest now have scored within the standard deviation of the post test mean. The remaining low score raised seven points but not enough to enter the post test range.

This would indicate that the experience had a positive effect upon the participants. Those with initially lower pretest scores moved upward in their scores and within the established mean of their peers. Those with initially higher scores remained within the mean of their peers after the experience. Though it must be noted again that none of these changes test out to be statistically significant in terms of the research variables mentioned above, it is interesting to note that the change scores are in the direction of “religious maturity.”

An Outlier

One particular post test score raises a concern. The person’s pretest score was well within the standard deviation and very close to the pretest mean, yet his post test score was over three standard deviations below the mean. Closer examination of this person’s score sheet suggests he reversed answers

on the post test. Fives became ones and twos became fours on his IBM score sheet. If his post test scores were accurate, it would reveal a radically negative self-appraisal at that post test time. This does not hold true to the participant's comments as made on the post test supplemental essay sheet about his experience in the small group. As a result, it is highly probable that these answers on the post test were made in error by reversing the values of the Likert scale.

When this participant's score is removed, as well as the author's scores, since the author was present in not just one but all groups, the old pretest mean of 630.91 becomes 630.10, and the old post test mean of 630.05 becomes 645.80. Instead of an overall change from pretest to post test of a -0.86, the mean of the difference scores becomes +15.70. This new change score is much different than the first one, and points in a positive direction for the general effect of the small group processes upon the participants, though not to the degree of statistical significance.

Basic Problem in Study

While small groups are inherently small by definition and that is believed to be to the good of the group and its process, it is not necessarily beneficial to research that is trying statistically to track influence upon the participants of the small group. Quantity, size, and numbers are needed for that. What was discovered as the statistical analysis was applied to this study was that the participant size of the study was too small. There was simply too small of a participant number to make it likely to reach statistical significance for any variable. The change required for statistical significance was enormous and needed to be nearly uniform among the selected participants. Such changes were not to be found in the participants of this study.

This is not to say there was no change in the participants through their involvement in the small groups. Many participants and some groups reported positive changes in terms of a few of the factors and dimensions of the RSI. These will be reported and highlighted below. All of the participants reported that the small group experience was a good experience for them and helpful in growing their faith. Yet, none of these changes in terms of the research variables are significant from the statistical point of view.

Sign Analysis

While statistical analysis maybe too rigorous for this study with its limited number of participants, "sign analysis" is helpful. Sign analysis tracks the direction of change, positive or negative, between the pretest score and the post test score. It gives an indication of movement in the participants, one way or the other. While it does not claim the statistical significance of that change, sign analysis is helpful nonetheless in this study for highlighting the change of participants and groups.

Looking at the overall individual scores, a three to one ratio of change is noticed in terms of the difference scores. There are fifteen participants (75%) who changed in a positive direction by having a higher post test score than a pretest test score, and there are five participants (25%) who changed in a negative direction, the post test score was lower than the pretest score. This would seem to indicate that the small group experience had a beneficial effect upon three out of four of the participants. The mean difference score was 27.3 for the positive changers and 18.6 for the negative changers. The positive difference score is half again larger than the negative difference score. Those participants who changed toward the positive did so to a greater degree than those that changed toward the negative.

Examining all the scores in his RSI data bank, Dr. Malony has found that the average score is 584. Five of this study's participants scored below this average on their pretests. Fifteen participants scored above this average. The following table presents this data.

Table 7
Test Scores Compared to RSI Average Scores

<u>Pretest Scores</u>		<u>Post test Scores</u>	
<u>Below</u>	<u>Above</u>	<u>Below</u>	<u>Above</u>
5	15	1	19

After the small group experience, only one participant remained below the average score in Malony's data bank, all the other participants tested above the average score in their post test. Again, this is showing a general positive movement among the study participants. It also shows that in terms of the RSI standard, the participants in this study were a "mature sample" and probably less likely to have dramatic change over a short-term experience. It should be recalled from the demographics on the participants, that with 86% of the them considering themselves Christians for over 25 years, 77% being United Methodists for over 10 years, and 45% being First Church members over 25 years, these participants appear to be fairly mature and religiously stable. It should not seem surprising therefore, upon reflection, to learn that these participants scored approximately the RSI standard average.

The following table provides more detailed information on these participants who had the most sizable changes, looking at their pretest and post test scores. A number of participants had sizable change scores. It appears

that three of the five participants who had the largest score changes had initial pretest scores that were a whole standard deviation below the pretest score mean, with a fourth right at the cusp, and all but one were also below Malony's average RSI test score. In addition, the two who showed the largest negative change were among the highest initial scores of the study. Indeed, all the people who changed in the negative direction began with initial high scores.

Table 8
Participants with Largest Test Score Changes

<u>Part.#</u>	<u>Group</u>	<u>Pretest</u>	<u>Post test</u>	<u>Score Change</u>
10	CD-B	571	640	+69
8	CD-A	533	596	+63
19	PO	635	689	+54
11	CD-B	553	605	+52
6	CD-A	562	608	+46
5	CD-A	690	661	-29
7	CD-A	707	683	-24

It is hard to imagine what the negative difference scores mean for these participants who scored so high on the pretest. Perhaps they inflated themselves on the pretest self-estimations and became more realistic on the post test. Perhaps involvement in the small group actually had a negative effect upon them. The score may also reflect a spiritual growth through the small group process that deepened their sensitivity to issues, resulting in a more critical self-appraisal. The actual reason remains unknown.

A closer examination of the participants who had larger difference scores reveals some interesting observations. The participant with the largest difference score (69) received higher scores for five of seven factors and all

dimensions. Clearly she saw herself as responding positively to the small group experience. Interestingly, even though this participant was a member of a Covenant Discipleship group, she had a high negative difference score for factor #1 (Importance of Religion in Daily Life) and factor #3 (Complexity of Faith). She did have large increases for factor #2 (Worship and Commitment) and for factor #7 (Optimal Religious Functioning). The participant with the second largest difference score (63) had increased scores in all factors and dimensions. Factors #2 and #7 were large increases, as were dimensions #4 (Leadership and Direction), #5 (Organized Religion), #6 (Experiencing Fellowship), #7 (Ethical), and #8 (Affirming Openness). The third largest difference score (54) came from a participant who had three negative changes, but large increases for factors #2 and #7 again and also for dimensions #2 (Grace and Love), #4 (Leadership and Direction), #5 (Organized Religion), and #6 (Experiencing Fellowship). The fourth participant in order of largest difference score (52) was also a Covenant Discipleship group member who had a very large decrease score for factor #1 (Importance of Religion in Daily Life), and small decrease scores for factor #3 (Complexity of Faith), factor #6 (Social Ethics), and dimension #3 (Repentant and Responsible). His positive difference scores were highest for factors #2 and #7, with modest but consistent increases in the other dimensions to give him a high overall difference score. The fifth largest difference score (46) was by a participant who had a large negative score in factor #1 (Importance of Religion in Daily Life), and minor negative scores in factor #3 (Complexity of Faith) and dimension #7 (Ethical). Interestingly, she also was a Covenant Discipleship group member. She did have strong positive change scores for factors #2 (Worship and Commitment) and #7 (Optimal Religious Functioning), and dimensions #1 (Awareness of

God), #4 (Leadership and Direction), #6 (Experiencing Fellowship), and #8 (Affirming Openness).

It is also interesting to note that all five large difference scorers had some common changes in factors and dimensions. This information is represented more clearly below. It would appear the small group experience affected these participants in a similar fashion in these six RSI measurement areas.

Table 9
Common Factors and Dimensions of Large Change Scorers

<u>Factors</u>	<u>Dimensions</u>
#2 Worship and Commitment	#4 Leadership and Direction
#7 Optimal Religious Functioning	#5 Organized Religion
	#6 Experiencing Fellowship
	#8 Affirming Openness

As the common factors and dimensions are examined, those participants who had sizable change scores are seen to have reported those changes in terms of their increased valuing of the church, its leadership, worship, and fellowship. They also observe an increased openness to others from their experience. This is very interesting information, in that it underscores the value for churches in sponsoring small groups. Those participants who grew spiritually the most in the direction of religious maturity, did so in ways that reflected an increased positive regard for the church, the body of Christ. Perhaps these types of small groups have a beneficial affect upon their sponsoring organization, whomever that sponsoring organization might be, or perhaps more intriguingly, a growing religious maturity is reflected in an increased appreciation for aspects of the life of the church.

Looking at the overall group scores, it is interesting to note the group membership of the participants in terms of their changes. The participants in the Talk Walkers, Covenant Discipleship B, Praying the Office, and Guided Imagery all changed to the positive direction. The participants in Lectio Divina all changed to the negative. The participants in Covenant Discipleship A were mixed. The following table provides some of the details.

Table 10
Small Groups Mean Change Scores

<u>Group</u>	<u>Participants</u>	<u>Mean Change Score</u>	
Talk Walkers	3	+15.0	
Covenant Discipleship A	3	+38.7	
	2		-26.5
Covenant Discipleship B	4	+35.0	
Lectio Divina	3		-13.3
Praying the Office	3	+32.7	
Guided Imagery	2	+5.0	

The fact that five of the six groups had uniform changes is interesting. Why that direction was positive for five of the groups and negative for one of the groups is statistically uncertain, yet the general implication is that the type of small group may have influenced these changes. When taken together, the Covenant Discipleship groups have seven participants who changed in the positive direction and only two participants who changed in the negative direction. So even though Covenant Discipleship A is a mixed group, when the two groups are merged it is noticed that those participants who were in the Covenant Discipleship groups tended toward positive change from their experience. In fact, seven out of nine participants (78%) changed in this

direction. The Lectio Divina group uniformly changed in the negative direction. Apparently this type of small group experience, though received well by these participants as attested to in their post test essay responses, did not have a positive impact on them for change. An alternative explanation for this uniform negative change score is that the RSI does not measure the type of change facilitated by the lectio divina experience.

Additionally, when these participant changes are presented linearly as is presented in Figure 16 entitled "Mean Change Scores per Participants noting Group Membership" found in the Appendix A, an interesting observation is made. Four out of five of the largest positive changes were made by participants in Covenant Discipleship groups. Yet it is also noticed that the two largest negative changes were also made by Covenant Discipleship group members. This is interesting though conflicting data.

Table 11
Ranking Small Group Mean Change Scores

<u>Group</u>	<u>Change Score</u>
Covenant Discipleship A (+subset)	+38.7
Covenant Discipleship B	+35.0
Praying the Office	+32.7
Talk Walkers	+15.0
Guided Imagery	+5.0
Lectio Divina	-13.3
Covenant Discipleship A (-subset)	-26.5

Table 11 shows the ranking of the small groups in terms of their mean difference scores. Again it is noticed that the Covenant Discipleship groups had the largest group difference score. Though it could not be statistically proven

that the difference score was due solely to the group itself, it is a most interesting possible implication. Praying the Office and then Talk Walkers also had large group difference scores, while Guided Imagery seemed to have only a modest effect upon its participants as measured by the RSI.

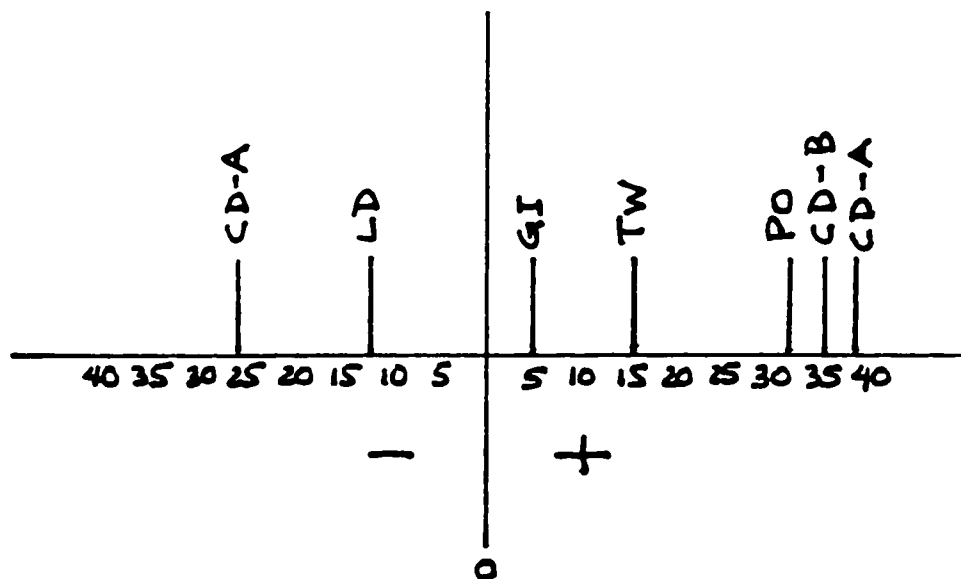


Figure 2

Ranking of Small Groups per Mean Change Scores

The preceding graph presents this information linearly. This presentation shows even more clearly the ordering of the groups per difference score and how the value of the difference score for the Covenant Discipleship groups and the Praying the Office group are at least two times the value of the next

difference score. This score then is seen as twice the value of the next score, which is a sizable comparative increase.

While it may not be statistically defensible, it is interesting to note that the discipleship group, the worship group, and the service group seem to have had the stronger effect upon their participants than the other groups. An explanation is difficult to attain. It does seem that these three styles of groups are more familiar to the participants than the others. Perhaps the participants were more open to their impact because of this familiarity. It also may be that these three groups stimulated change in the dimensions measured best by the RSI, more so than the other groups.

A closer examination of the difference scores of the groups in terms of the factors and dimensions of the RSI reveals some interesting observations. Covenant Discipleship A consistently had plus and minus scores per each factor and dimension. Sometimes there was three positive participant scores and two negative participant scores, other times two positive and three negative participant scores. Interestingly, it was never all positive or all negative, and only on occasion was it mostly one or the other among the participants. Apparently, the participants in this group were more heterogeneous than the others and were affected differently. A closer look at this group's composition shows that there were two married couples in it, but they were diverse as to duration of belief and length of membership. This observation may be explanatory. On the other hand, Covenant Discipleship B and the other groups had a number of all positive or all negative participant scores on the factors and dimensions. The following breakdown helps present the findings.

Table 12

Common Factors and Dimensions with Changed Scores per Small Group

Covenant Discipleship B Group

All Positive Factors

#4 Rejection of Simplistic Faith

#5 Involvement in Organized Religion

#7 Optimal Religious Functioning

All Positive Dimensions

#1 Awareness of God

#4 Leadership and Direction

#5 Organized Religion

#6 Experiencing Fellowship

#7 Ethical

All Negative Factors

#1 Importance of Religion in
Daily Life

#3 Complexity of Faith

All Negative Dimensions

none

Praying the Office Group

All Positive Factors

#2 Worship and Commitment

#7 Optimal Religious Functioning

All Positive Dimensions

#4 Leadership and Direction

#5 Organized Religion

All Negative Factors

#1 Importance of Religion in
Daily Life

All Negative Dimensions

none

Talk Walkers Group

All Positive Factors

none

All Positive Dimensions

#6 Experiencing Fellowship

#8 Affirming Openness

All Negative Factors

none

All Negative Dimensions

none

Guided Imagery GroupAll Positive Factors

#2 Worship and Commitment

#3 Complexity of Faith

#7 Optimal Religious Functioning

All Negative Factors

none

All Positive Dimensions

#2 Grace and Love

All Negative Dimensions

#7 Ethical

Lectio Divina GroupAll Positive Factors

#1 Importance of Religion in Daily Life

All Negative Factors

none

All Positive Dimensions

none

All Negative Dimensions

#2 Grace and Love

#4 Leadership and Doctrine

Summarizing these findings, it is noticed that there is a great variety among the factors and dimensions that are "all positive" or "all negative." When people changed from their group experience, they generally understood these changes in different ways or reflected in different aspects of their religious expression. As "all positive" factors, #7 comes up three times and #2 is mentioned twice. Factor #7 (Optimal Religious Functioning) is considered an integrative factor by Dr. Malony and so has more of a summary quality to it; Factor #2 (Worship and Commitment) appraises one's sense of reverence and the quality of relationship to God through faith. Only Factor #1 (Importance of Religion in Daily Life) occurs twice as an all negative factor. It is the only factor or dimension that occurs more than once as an "all negative." The implication is that growth occurred in the areas of these factors and dimensions. Also implied is that these areas of growth were most reflective of the influence of the small group upon the participant, since it affected all the participants of a particular

small group in a similar way.

From this research it may be possible to conclude that spiritual growth comes in a variety of ways to different people. While a particular type of group experience might stimulate a certain form of growth this time for a particular person, at another occasion the person might respond differently and change in an alternate dimension or factor. In addition, different types of groups might engender similar growth in diverse people.

What can safely be concluded is that groups do facilitate change, though the type of change and the significance of the change most likely depend on the person and what might be called their "place in life" at the time. The participants' openness and willingness for change might be the most significant variable in this whole endeavor of attempting to stimulate people toward spiritual growth and religious maturity. Certainly, small groups are a helpful tool for this ministry. Since covenant discipleship groups did produce the greatest change scores, there does seem to be some support in this research for the logic that small groups that employ a more holistic concept of spirituality actually might stimulate a greater change toward religious maturity. This finding is implied, though not proven.

As the following excerpts from the evaluative essays show, all the participants valued their experience and felt that they grew. The uniformity of these types of evaluative responses may indicate merely an appreciation on the part of the participants for the experience, or it may indicate the illusive nature of spiritual growth and the true difficulty in identifying it or measuring it. Most likely, both observations are true here. As superlative as the RSI might be among the other measuring instruments available, test results seem to indicate that more work in this area of measurement is needed. It also may be true that the RSI,

like the other measurement tools, is better at measuring large change from a lower initial status than small change from an initially higher status. The kind of fine measurement needed in such a situation of smaller change still may be best done by a subjective interview technique rather than an objective inventory.

Evaluative Essays

A survey of the remarks made by participants to the questionnaire that accompanied the RSI post test show that all participants seemed to enjoy their small group experience and reported a positive sense of spiritual growth from their participation. This is an interesting fact, since not all participants had a positive change score on their RSIs. While the scores represented some people as growing spiritually and others as not, the evaluative essays represent all the participants as growing in their faith. While these reports are not interesting statistically, they are important in terms of understanding the experience for the participants. They suggest there is a possibility that the RSI does not get to the generalized "heart of the matter" for the participants. On the other hand though, these evaluative essays simply may convey the general goodwill of participants in wanting to report that their experience was positive, while the RSI gets "down to brass tacks" as to whether there really was any substantive change. What is known is that the participants did enjoy the experience and believed they grew spiritually from it.

Feedback from the participants is provided below, taken from their responses to question #1: "Generally, how was this small group experience for you?" and question #5: "Do you think you grew in your spirituality toward more faithful discipleship through this small group experience? If so, in what ways? How would you describe this growth?" Each participant is listed with his or her

change score and group membership.

Participant 01 -36 change All Groups

"A enriching experience."

"Yes. Depth prayer increased; exposure to disadvantaged sensitized; more appreciation of variety of believer and spiritual style."

Participant 02 +15 change Talk Walker Group

"Very good."

"I was pleasantly surprised to meet so many humble, grateful recipients. It changed my opinion of the homeless and makes me want to be of more help to them."

Participant 03 +17 change Talk Walker Group

"Good."

"Yes I believe I grew spiritually by just being a part of an act in which I did something for others."

Participant 04 +13 change Talk Walker Group

"This was a good experience for me."

(no response)

Participant 05 -29 change Covenant Discipleship A Group

"It was a very positive and enjoyable experience."

"The process of being held accountable made me reflect on my daily walk."

Participant 06 +46 change Covenant Discipleship A Group

"Good, I looked forward to it each week."

"Yes, the small group experience helped me to make reading the Bible and praying and thinking about God a priority, instead of something I do when I have the time. I don't feel any holier but yet I feel closer to God because I think

of God more regularly now and I look forward to talking to the group members about this relationship.”

Participant 07 -24 change Covenant Discipleship A Group

“Good - positive.”

“Yes! I’m very much more aware of my discipleship because of several of the items in our covenant and plan to continue this practice on my own. To meet and discuss does make one accountable - for more/better spiritual growth.”

Participant 08 +63 change Covenant Discipleship A Group

“I learned about the Bible in this small group experience. I also enjoyed sharing the covenant with other church members, and listening to their applications of it in their daily lives.”

“Yes I do. It was a tremendous help to hear how others incorporated God into their daily lives. It was a great deal of fun sharing with new friends and realizing that spiritual growth doesn’t always have to be so serious.”

Participant 09 +7 change Covenant Discipleship A Group

“Positive in that I became closer to the individuals present; maybe not possible with larger group.”

“My growth was in better understanding my level of spirituality; and being exposed to various ways of practicing my spirituality.”

Participant 10 +69 change Covenant Discipleship B Group

“Very positive and uplifting.”

“Yes! Today is (over two weeks after end of experience) and I’ve only missed my daily Bible reading once. Prayer before reading is quite helpful. I feel much more committed to daily Bible reading.”

Participant 11 +52 change Covenant Discipleship B Group

"I enjoyed the small group experience. Particularly getting to know the other members of the group better."

"Yes. Having made the covenant made me aware of the commitments within it, which caused me to apply them to my daily life."

Participant 12 +14 change Covenant Discipleship B Group

"After a cool beginning, I felt a warming feeling as we met and reported common goals and problems."

"This group helped give me assurances. Assurance to state feelings; assurance to tell anybody what Holy Spirit may be doing in my life. Working hard on the last one - a start on it!!"

Participant 13 +5 change Covenant Discipleship B Group

"It is a surprise to me that keeping the covenant of discipleship for six weeks could have awakened a so much greater awareness of God's Presence in my life. I am very thankful that I participated in this small group."

"I really want to read the Bible daily and to develop a more organized prayer time, not just as I think of someone or something that needs a prayer."

Participant 14 -5 change Lectio Divina Group

"It was very positive. It provided a change to get to know you a little bit better as well as (the two other group members). I liked the opportunity to quiet myself and to focus on a small portion of scripture, finding meaning in it for myself."

"Yes -- I believe every experience like this adds to my spiritual growth in some way. It wasn't a dramatic growth, but it allowed me time to focus and care for a small group of people and to really feel connected to them. It reinforced my desire to be a better disciple of Christ. The "kingdom of God" passages have sometimes been a little difficult to understand thoroughly and this gave me

an excellent opportunity to really focus well on some of those parables and think more deeply about them. I think I came out of this experience with better understanding in that area."

Participant 15 -299 change (outlier) Lectio Divina Group

"Good experience. Your openness was great and loved getting to know (the other group members) in a little more depth."

"I have practiced Lectio Divina in my devotions over the past eight years so that group was a continuing of my growth. The 'pressure' of having to attend with such a small group was good in terms of learning faithful discipleship."

Participant 16 -17 change Lectio Divina Group

"I truly appreciated the opportunity to share in this spiritual experience. I felt very comfortable in being able to express my true feelings."

"I feel God did direct me to this study group. I feel I got a deeper understanding and insight into what Jesus expressed in the parables. I enjoyed our sharing experience. It was a true spiritual experience. Very good."

Participant 17 -18 change Lectio Divina Group

"This experience was very rewarding. I appreciated the intimacy of the group with our our pastor. The quiet reflection on the scripture was time well spent."

"The quiet time we have together was most effective. I realized that it is important to take more time for simply quiet reflection and listening to the calm of God's voice to us. I do feel further and extended growth from these weeks together."

Participant 18 +16 change Praying the Office Group

"It was good. The fact that we were just a few made it better. I guess I am not a big-crowd person."

"I felt blessed to be there and to be a part of the circle of trust."

Participant 19 +54 change Praying the Office Group

"It was very comforting and of course very positive."

"Yes; by actually feeling God's love inside me and then focusing my soul to reach out in prayer during these meetings; I stayed more focused to become what God wants me to be during the period between meetings. Of course this is what I wanted to achieve by attending church; that is to be what God wants me to be, a better person."

Participant 20 +28 change Praying the Office Group

"I've enjoyed it; it has been nice to have another set time for worship and praise. I've also enjoyed the chance to worship with the same 2-3 people each week and get to know them a little more."

"Yes. I learned a new worship style that could augment my daily devotions. I learned a different style of prayer (an organized form of petition) that has broadened my sense of remembering who to pray for. I also got more practice in praying aloud in a group."

Participant 21 +7 change Guided Imagery Group

"I looked forward to each week to the time and was never disappointed. The fact that our group was so small gave us the opportunity to ask about matters of personal interest and concern and it was very valuable to hear your perspectives."

"I did learn some things: a technique for relaxation, and for attempting mind/body healing."

Participant 22 +3 change Guided Imagery Group

"Great! Definitely time well spent! A useful tool too."

(no response)

It is interesting to note that participants who had a positive change score and participants who had a negative change score seemed to report a good experience and a development in their spirituality. This may indicate that the RSI measurements do not get at the general perspective of the participants in their small group experiences or that participants are generally positive in their estimation of their small group experiences even if they did not notice and report through the RSI much of a change from the experience.

A full year after the small group experience, Participant 21 wrote a letter in which she stated that the influence of the small group continued in her life over the subsequent time. She remarked that it was in this longer view of the process that she discovered the greater effect of the group learning upon her. Her comments highlighted the potential long-term effects of the small groups upon their participants, effects not measurable after two months, and the possibility that important spiritual growth and movement toward religious maturity may require more time than what was available to the participants in this study. A two-month period simply may be too short of a period of time for significant spiritual change to arise in participants through involvement in these types of small groups and as measurable by the RSI.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

As Robert Wuthnow reflected upon his research of the small group movement in America, he remarked "The problem, however, is that virtually no systematic research has been conducted among the members of small groups. Thus, it has been impossible to say with any assurance whether or not these gatherings are nurturing spirituality."¹ This study aimed at addressing this concern, bringing the spotlight of analysis upon what was going on spiritually for people in small groups that frequently occurred in local churches. Wuthnow had discovered that many people felt they changed spiritually in small groups, whether or not the stated purpose of the group was religious. Neither did it seem to matter to his participants what style of religious group they were involved in -- most any kind was as good as another for facilitating their spiritual growth. Interestingly, this study generally supports Wuthnow's observations. While participants in four out of five groups rated themselves on the RSI as positively changed, all the participants reported spiritual growth in their essay evaluations. This study aspired to highlight that some groups would be better at facilitating spiritual change in people than others. More specifically, the hypothesis was that a small group that provided participants an opportunity to engage more of their personhood in the process, to use a broader array of their spiritual aspects in the small group experience, would be more effective at facilitating spiritual growth than other groups that were less comprehensive in their approach. While sign analysis indicates this hypothesis seems true, the study did not produce results that would prove statistically these statements.

Future research in this area needs to be performed, and clearly, when it

¹ Wuthnow, *"I Come Away Stronger,"* 2.

is done, it needs to involve a larger sample. If the participant number were increased, it would be easier to attain a statistical level of significance in the analysis of change variables. With a larger population, some of the interesting trends highlighted in this study might prove more noteworthy. In addition, future research should extend over a longer period of time. While it is true that change can occur in a moment, the type of developmental change under investigation as “spiritual growth toward faithful discipleship” appears to be more long-term. A study of longer length would allow for the cycles of change that occur in people’s lives. It would provide time for the dawning and receding of insights and emotions to progress forward and register observable changes in persons. Clearly, a study that would run a half year or more would have a greater chance of stimulating and observing a spiritual maturing in participants in small groups such as those used in this study. Future research also might cast a light on why married women participated disproportionately in this study to their percentage in the congregation. Did the small group experience attract them, were they more amenable to join a research project, or were they simply more available at the time to participate?

For the time being, the hope of documenting a statistically significant influence of small groups upon their participants remains unrealized. It is obvious that participants in small groups enjoy their experience and claim the experience has affected them. Those in religious small groups who have sought an encounter with the sacred and spiritual growth report that their small group experiences provided just that for them. They discovered themselves uplifted in moments of transcendent awe, and they found that they had grown in their faith. There is a sense also that the direction of this growth is toward a maturity of faith and a heightened level of discipleship, yet measuring this

development is challenging at best. People do report, though, that they have grown spiritually and do give evidence of that growth in ways that indicate a maturing faith and deepened level of discipleship in terms of the criterion implicit in Malony's RSI.

While participants of the study grew from experiences in four out of the five types of small groups, not all the growth was perceived as equally important for them nor to the same level or size of change. Those people in the two Covenant Discipleship groups and the Praying the Office group appraised their change from the group experience as at least twice as powerful than the other groups' participants. The Covenant Discipleship group is a group that focuses the participants' attention on a wide variety of qualities of life and personhood. It is seen as the style of group that most fully appeals to a holistic model of spirituality. With its attention upon works of piety and works of mercy, the focus of the Covenant Discipleship experience is broader than other groups. It had been anticipated that the effect of this group upon its participants would be greater as compared to the effect of the other groups upon their participants. While this was found true, since the participants in the Covenant Discipleship groups did have the greatest change scores, it was not as sizable as expected.

Interestingly, the Praying the Office group had change scores nearly equal to the Covenant Discipleship groups. This group's focus was in simple worship, with a time of prayer involved in the worship experience. Worship with prayer does encourage the God encounter and does lift one's vision beyond concerns only for self, yet it does not in particular employ a holistic understanding of spirituality. It could be said fairly that it is more mystical or internal in its approach, and does not particularly draw upon intellectually stimulating, emotionally expressive, relational, or physical qualities of the

person. Yet nonetheless, the Praying the Office group had a high change score, nearly as high as the Covenant Discipleship group. The theory that the more comprehensive the group's approach to spirituality the greater change will need to be revisited and investigated further.

Small groups do provide participants with an exceptional opportunity to learn about themselves and change. When small groups attempt to be shaped by Lewin's experiential learning process, they will help their participants to formulate a learning theory, test it out behaviorally, assess its consequences and obtain feedback, and then go on to reflect, modify and refine their learning. Through this process of change, many group participants discover aspects of faith, manners of their spirituality, and expressions for their discipleship that aid them on their spiritual journey toward more fully inculcating the mind of Christ in their lives.

It is important to note that in his research Wuthnow does observe that "on the whole, these results are consistent with the assertions of writers and religious leaders who suggest that small groups can be enormously important in nurturing the spirituality of individuals and revitalizing the world of religious organizations."² Small groups are important, significantly influential upon a person's spiritual growth, and worthy to be pursued in the local church to stimulate spiritual growth, and through that, renewal of the larger congregational group.

Rogers would argue for learning experiences that connect with and enhance people's participation in the Spirit's rhythm in their lives and in the church.³ By doing this, people avail themselves of God's powerful and life-

² Wuthnow, *"I Come Away Stronger,"* 384.

³ Rogers, 485.

transforming grace and, being intentionally under its influence, find themselves moving spiritually forward in their lives toward a greater personal well-being and maturity of faith. Such spirit-oriented personal change cannot help but change the complexion of the local church.

Deshler argues in his book on small groups in the church that God is using them to answer the needs of our generation. "This is not to say that the converting power of God is flowing only through the small group movement, or that any church without prayer cells is not a redemptive church. It is clear, however, that many churches have been revived through small sharing groups."⁴ Small groups may not be the panacea to solve all the ailments of the church these days, yet in the small group movement is found a significant help for facilitating personal spiritual growth toward faithful discipleship.

⁴ G. Byron Deshler, *The Power of Personal Groups* (Nashville: Tidings, 1960), 7.

APPENDIX A

Support Materials for Chapters

Appendix A contains the the figures referred to in Chapters 4 and 5. These figures present the questionnaires that accompanied the RSI pretest and post test, the RSI itself, publicity for the study to solicit participants, and a graph of an analysis of data.

**SPIRITUAL GROWTH GROUP STUDY
WALTER C. DILG, JR.
FIRST CHURCH VENTURA
SPRING 1998**

Thanks for agreeing to participate in the small groups this Spring and to answering the attached questionnaire. Your confidentiality is assured for the questionnaire. Answer freely and honestly and look forward to learning a bit about yourself once the small group experience has run its course.

Instructions for completing the questionnaire appear on its face sheet. Please read and follow them. The form should only take about one half hour or so. Enjoy yourself as you complete it. Findings from the questionnaire will be reported to you this summer.

To help me with the demographics of who is participating in the small groups, please answer the following questions on this sheet prior to beginning the questionnaire. Bring both this sheet and the questionnaire answer form completed to the first small group session.

- A. Name: _____
- B. Marital Status: _____
- C. How long have you been a Christian? _____ year(s)
- D. How long have you been a United Methodist? _____ year(s)
- E. How long have you been a member of our local Church? _____ year(s)
- F. How would you characterize your involvement at church?
- | | | | | |
|----------|---|---|---|--------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| very | | | | very |
| inactive | | | | active |
- G. How would you describe your health?
- | | | | | |
|-----------|---|---|---|---------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| very | | | | very |
| unhealthy | | | | healthy |
- H. How attentive are you to your physical needs?
- | | | | | |
|-------------|---|---|---|-----------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| very | | | | very |
| inattentive | | | | attentive |

Figure 3

First Questionnaire for Pretest RSI

SPIRITUAL GROWTH GROUP STUDY
WALTER C. DILG, JR.
FIRST CHURCH VENTURA
SPRING 1998

SECOND ADMINISTRATION OF QUESTIONNAIRE

Thank you for participating in the small groups at Church. Attached is the same questionnaire you completed at the start, which I am asking you to answer again now that you have completed the small group experience. Follow the instructions on its face sheet, just as you did before.

Please attend to the questionnaire in a timely fashion, so the appraisal of your experience is fresh. Submit your completed answer sheet to the church office for my attention. I am suggesting a one week deadline for this task. I appreciate your cooperation on this. Remember, once the questionnaires are scored, we will have an opportunity to meet to review the results. I will contact you and make these arrangements.

In addition to the questionnaire, please answer the following general questions so I have a better sense of your personal appraisal of the small group experience

1. Generally, how was this small group experience for you?

2. Can you identify a high point or sacred moment in the experience? Please share it

3. Did you have a problem or concern about the experience? If so, relate it here.

... over ...

Figure 4

Second Questionnaire for Post-test RSI, page 1

4. To help me understand your perspective, please briefly define the following terms:

Spirituality -

Spiritual Growth -

Discipleship-

5. Do you think you grew in your spirituality toward more faithful discipleship through this small group experience? If so, in what ways? How would you describe this growth?
6. If there is anything else you would like to share with me, any additional comments about the experience or your participation in the group, please do so in the space below

Thanks again for you participation and cooperation'

Please submit completed questionnaire to church office in one week.

Figure 5

Second Questionnaire for Post-test RSI, page 2

**SPIRITUAL GROWTH GROUP STUDY
WALTER C. DILG, JR.
FIRST CHURCH VENTURA
SPRING 1998**

APPENDIX TO SECOND QUESTIONNAIRE

July 21, 1998

Dear Small Group Participants,

OPPS!! I omitted three important questions on the second questionnaire that need to be answered so there is a comparison to the first questionnaire. They are provided below.

Please answer them immediately and return this sheet to me as soon as possible. Your speedy cooperation will be greatly appreciated! As soon as I get them all in to the office, I will be able to get the comparison completed.

- F. How would you characterize your involvement at church?
1 2 3 4 5
very very
inactive active
- G. How would you describe your health?
1 2 3 4 5
very very
unhealthy healthy
- H. How attentive are you to your physical needs?
1 2 3 4 5
very very
inattentive attentive

Thanks again for your participation in the small group and your help for this study.

Grace,

Walt
Walter Dill

Figure 6

Appendix to Second Questionnaire

Religious Status Inventory

© 1988 by David E. Massey and Mark N. Hadlock

Instructions

This inventory contains 160 items designed to study the way people think about their Christian faith and how it interacts with their lives. It may be taken by those who consider themselves Christians. Items will reflect what you believe, feel, and do, in connection with your faith. There are no right or wrong answers. Just answer what is true for you.

On the answer sheet provided for you please write your name and other information which has been asked for. Then begin by reading each statement and deciding whether this is true of you or not true of you. For each item indicate on the answer sheet a number representing the following answers:

Not true of me					True of me
-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	
1	2	3	4	5	

As you answer the items, please keep the following in mind:

1. Using a number 2 pencil, darken the appropriate circle on the answer sheet completely.
2. Respond to each statement as it is true for you. It is best to say what you really believe, feel, or do.
3. Give the answer which comes to mind first. Don't spend too much time thinking about a question.
4. Statements may not reflect all the information you would like to give about yourself. Give the best possible response to the statement listed.
5. Respond to all statements. Do not skip any.

Figure 7

Religious Status Inventory

(Used by permission.)

1. I'm always happy because God takes care of all my problems.
2. I have read many books about my faith in the past year.
3. Making a decision is as simple as praying to God and waiting for an answer.
4. I regularly attend church or a religious community.
5. Religion is just one aspect of my life.
6. I pray for help in my decisions rather than ask for specific answers.
7. I have little desire to read a religious book.
8. When someone asks me to forgive them I am able to do so.
9. Whatever problems I have I bring on myself.
10. I have been unable to find a group of Christians where I feel accepted.
11. I contribute a lot money for social causes.
12. When I've done something wrong I try to do something to correct the situation.
13. Both prayer and personal action are needed to deal with difficult problems. One without the other is insufficient.
14. Without my Christian faith I would be a much different person.
15. I change my religious beliefs frequently.
16. I usually find something else to do rather than go to church.
17. When God forgives me I feel like I'm "off the hook".
18. I would be free of problems if life treated me better.
19. There are a lot of different parts of my faith that I want to explore.
20. God can use my anger in positive ways.
21. I make most of my decisions based on the idea that I should do to others what I want them to do to me.
22. I feel a desire to worship God throughout the week.
23. Jesus Christ is the Lord of my life.
24. I am trying to help change many things that are unfair in the world.
25. When I've wronged someone it is useless to apologize to them.
26. I know that God will bring good out of all my painful situations because he loves me.
27. Being with non-Christians makes me feel uncomfortable.
28. It's important to do what other people want you to do.
29. God is more important to me than anything else in my life.
30. I feel accepted and understood when I am with other Christians.
31. I am conscious that my relationship to God affects how I relate to my family.
32. I decide if something is right or wrong by what happens to me.
33. I feel safe and secure knowing that God loves me.
34. When I sin I have a sense that God cares less about what happens to me.
35. I consider myself very active in moral issues.
36. I consistently give a large amount of my income to a church or religious organization.

37. It is difficult for me to relate to Christians who believe differently than I do.
38. When making major decisions I ask for help from my family, friends and God.
39. I trust that the future is in God's hands and that I will accept whatever he has for me.
40. I need God's help in every minor decision I make.
41. One reason I go to church is to feel important in my community.
42. Denominational differences mean little to me.
43. When I am with a group of Christians I feel at home.
44. I feel good about what I do because I know I am contributing to society.
45. I have little desire to be involved in social action.
46. Receiving God's forgiveness inspires me to worship and praise God.
47. I feel comfortable receiving God's love and forgiveness.
48. All I can do is take what comes in life.
49. When I have hurt someone I feel so guilty that I find myself avoiding them.
50. I fail to understand why things have to happen to me.
51. It bothers me that God does so little to make my life better.
52. I try to keep my religion separate from other aspects of my life.
53. I lack direction from God in how to fulfill my roles with my work and family.
54. If someone hurts me it makes it hard for me to trust them again.
55. I have a regular devotional time in order to grow in my faith.
56. Some problems and sins are so complex that it is difficult to put blame on any one thing.
57. I expect some hard times in the future but trust that God will help me through them.
58. I have difficulty handling someone getting angry at me.
59. I feel a common bond with other Christians.
60. God is an impersonal force.
61. I can do little to make my future better.
62. I'm uneasy around people from different cultures or races.
63. I am quick to ask for forgiveness when I have hurt someone.
64. I consistently go to church or a religious community twice a week or more.
65. My religious beliefs should be kept separate from what I do in my daily life.
66. I can know God merely by interacting with people.
67. I respect beliefs that are different than mine.
68. The causes of my problems include both myself and my surroundings.
69. Prayer helps me feel closer to God.
70. I am involved in my community as an expression of my faith.
71. I continue to wish the best for someone who has hurt me.

72. I volunteer quite often for church positions.
73. Prayer is useless in helping make major decisions.
74. I enjoy being around other people of different cultures or races.
75. I think about what God would want for my life when I make any major decision.
76. I have a great deal of problem with people who feel that our culture is better than others.
77. I see Jesus mainly as the founder of Christianity.
78. I feel forgiven by God when I sin.
79. It bothers me when religious differences keep people from becoming friends.
80. I would lose interest in my job if it paid less.
81. In the midst of prayer I sometimes stop and just listen.
82. Sometimes anger allows me to be productive in my actions.
83. I rarely go to church or a religious community.
84. I stand in awe and wonder of God my creator.
85. To make Jesus relevant to my daily life seems to be taking religion too far.
86. I continue to give money to the church during times when it is hard to pay my bills.
87. As a Christian everything is wonderful and will continue to be.
88. I have close friendships with both Christians and non-Christians.
89. God punishes sin.
90. I am careful to do what is right for fear that I will be punished by God.
91. I fail to see how my religious life relates to what I do every day.
92. Often I wonder if God really forgives me.
93. When problems are difficult I recognize there is nothing I can do so I give it all to God.
94. My faith affects every aspect of my life.
95. My main reason for going to church is to make me feel better.
96. When I think of God's love I get a warm and tender feeling inside.
97. I believe that God has a purpose for me in my job or what I do.
98. I seldom take time to think about my relationship with God.
99. My decisions are always founded on my faith.
100. Pain makes me question God's role in my life.
101. I have a hard time accepting God's forgiveness because I feel unworthy to receive it.
102. It is hard to be open and honest with other Christians.
103. I feel good about how God uses me in what I do.
104. When I have wronged someone my first thought is how that person might be feeling.
105. I lack close relationships with any group of Christians.
106. I rarely give money to the church.
107. I expect to have both good times and bad times in my future.

108. People from other cultures who become Christians will need to give up much of their cultural lifestyle.
109. I try to serve God through my work.
110. I have little desire to give money to the church.
111. The church lacks a feeling of being like a family to me.
112. I rarely consider what God would think about my actions.
113. I enjoy my work because it makes me feel good about myself.
114. When someone has wronged me I give them the cold shoulder.
115. What is right or wrong is sometimes unclear.
116. I refuse to listen to someone who says things contrary to the Bible.
117. I rely solely on my own resources to make major decisions in my life.
118. People from some cultures or races are difficult to trust.
119. Suffering seems to develop and refine my faith and character.
120. I need friendships with both Christians and non-Christians to help me grow.
121. God will still love me regardless of what I do.
122. Without my faith in God I would be lacking much of my sense of what is right or wrong.
123. I live my life without need of God's assistance.
124. When I have hurt someone I try to ask myself what I can do to make it right.
125. My faith is renewed when I attend church.
126. I seldom struggle with decisions of what is right or wrong.
127. I avoid volunteering for church positions.
128. I need to be more involved in church than just being a member.
129. If you follow the Bible you will know what is right or wrong in all situations.
130. The main reason I worship God is that I feel I should.
131. Involvement in a religious community seems unnecessary to me.
132. I avoid churches that encourage a lot of involvement.
133. I don't get angry.
134. I try to keep a balance between what I can do for myself and what God can do for me.
135. It is important for Christians to separate themselves from non-Christians.
136. It would be hard to refrain from worshipping God.
137. Both God's guidance and my capabilities are important for dealing with difficult situations.
138. It's hard for me to understand how other people get so excited about God's love.
139. My concern for others is based on my love for God.
140. Knowing God loves me gets me very excited.
141. I am comfortable with other people believing differently than I.
142. I go to church mainly to worship God and fellowship with other Christians.

143. If I've done something wrong it is better to let it go than to bring it up again and apologize for it.
144. Because God loves and forgives me it makes me want to go out of my way to help someone else.
145. I pray mainly when things are out of my control.
146. I have little need to deal with moral issues because very few effect me.
147. I like to just sit and enjoy a church service. I dislike being asked to participate in it.
148. My religious beliefs are complex.
149. I feel an absence of God's love in my life.
150. I go to church because I want to grow as a Christian.
151. I feel guilty when I fail to pray.
152. Talking to people from different cultures helps me to have a broader view of life.
153. Some people would say that my faith is too simple.
154. I am very active in church activities.
155. To know that God loves me is the only thing I need to know about my faith.
156. God is disappointed with me when I get angry.
157. I have discussed my faith with others on many occasions within the past year.
158. I live my daily life without thinking about my religious beliefs.
159. Discussing my faith with others seems unnecessary.
160. I try to keep an open mind about other beliefs and am willing to change my beliefs if necessary.

NAME (Last, First, M.I.)		SEX	GRADE	SIDE 1	
GENERAL PURPOSE - NCS® - ANSWER SHEET				SEE IMPORTANT MARKING INSTRUCTIONS ON SIDE 2	
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div>1 000000 A B C D E</div> <div>2 000000 A B C D E</div> <div>3 000000 A B C D E</div> <div>4 000000 A B C D E</div> <div>5 000000 A B C D E</div> <div>6 000000 A B C D E</div> <div>7 000000 A B C D E</div> <div>8 000000 A B C D E</div> <div>9 000000 A B C D E</div> <div>10 000000 A B C D E</div> </div>				<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div>31 000000 A B C D E</div> <div>32 000000 A B C D E</div> <div>33 000000 A B C D E</div> <div>34 000000 A B C D E</div> <div>35 000000 A B C D E</div> <div>36 000000 A B C D E</div> <div>37 000000 A B C D E</div> <div>38 000000 A B C D E</div> <div>39 000000 A B C D E</div> <div>40 000000 A B C D E</div> </div>	
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div>11 000000 A B C D E</div> <div>12 000000 A B C D E</div> <div>13 000000 A B C D E</div> <div>14 000000 A B C D E</div> <div>15 000000 A B C D E</div> <div>16 000000 A B C D E</div> <div>17 000000 A B C D E</div> <div>18 000000 A B C D E</div> <div>19 000000 A B C D E</div> <div>20 000000 A B C D E</div> </div>				<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div>41 000000 A B C D E</div> <div>42 000000 A B C D E</div> <div>43 000000 A B C D E</div> <div>44 000000 A B C D E</div> <div>45 000000 A B C D E</div> <div>46 000000 A B C D E</div> <div>47 000000 A B C D E</div> <div>48 000000 A B C D E</div> <div>49 000000 A B C D E</div> <div>50 000000 A B C D E</div> </div>	
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div>51 000000 A B C D E</div> <div>52 000000 A B C D E</div> <div>53 000000 A B C D E</div> <div>54 000000 A B C D E</div> <div>55 000000 A B C D E</div> <div>56 000000 A B C D E</div> <div>57 000000 A B C D E</div> <div>58 000000 A B C D E</div> <div>59 000000 A B C D E</div> <div>60 000000 A B C D E</div> </div>				<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div>61 000000 A B C D E</div> <div>62 000000 A B C D E</div> <div>63 000000 A B C D E</div> <div>64 000000 A B C D E</div> <div>65 000000 A B C D E</div> <div>66 000000 A B C D E</div> <div>67 000000 A B C D E</div> <div>68 000000 A B C D E</div> <div>69 000000 A B C D E</div> <div>70 000000 A B C D E</div> </div>	
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div>61 000000 A B C D E</div> <div>62 000000 A B C D E</div> <div>63 000000 A B C D E</div> <div>64 000000 A B C D E</div> <div>65 000000 A B C D E</div> <div>66 000000 A B C D E</div> <div>67 000000 A B C D E</div> <div>68 000000 A B C D E</div> <div>69 000000 A B C D E</div> <div>70 000000 A B C D E</div> </div>				<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div>71 000000 A B C D E</div> <div>72 000000 A B C D E</div> <div>73 000000 A B C D E</div> <div>74 000000 A B C D E</div> <div>75 000000 A B C D E</div> <div>76 000000 A B C D E</div> <div>77 000000 A B C D E</div> <div>78 000000 A B C D E</div> <div>79 000000 A B C D E</div> <div>80 000000 A B C D E</div> </div>	
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div>81 000000 A B C D E</div> <div>82 000000 A B C D E</div> <div>83 000000 A B C D E</div> <div>84 000000 A B C D E</div> <div>85 000000 A B C D E</div> <div>86 000000 A B C D E</div> <div>87 000000 A B C D E</div> <div>88 000000 A B C D E</div> <div>89 000000 A B C D E</div> <div>90 000000 A B C D E</div> </div>				<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div>91 000000 A B C D E</div> <div>92 000000 A B C D E</div> <div>93 000000 A B C D E</div> <div>94 000000 A B C D E</div> <div>95 000000 A B C D E</div> <div>96 000000 A B C D E</div> <div>97 000000 A B C D E</div> <div>98 000000 A B C D E</div> <div>99 000000 A B C D E</div> <div>100 000000 A B C D E</div> </div>	

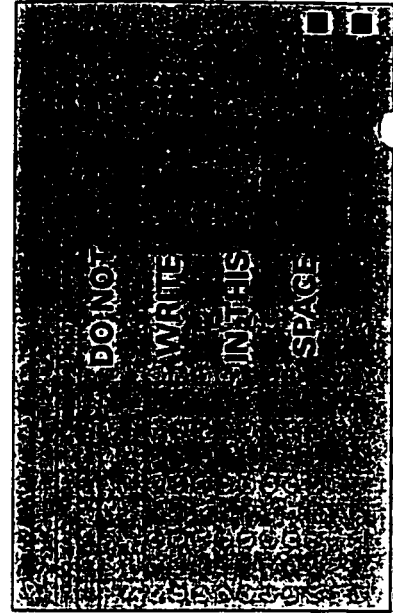
Figure 8

RSI Computer Answer Sheet, page 1

SIDE 2

GENERAL PURPOSE NCS® ANSWER SHEET form no. 4521

EXAMPLES	IMPORTANT DIRECTIONS FOR MARKING ANSWERS
<p>WRONG</p> <p>1 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E</p> <p>WRONG</p> <p>2 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E</p> <p>WRONG</p> <p>3 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E</p> <p>RIGHT</p> <p>4 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input checked="" type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use #2 pencil only. • Do NOT use ink or ballpoint pens. • Make heavy black marks that fill the circle completely. • Erase cleanly any answer you wish to change. • Make no stray marks on the answer sheet.



101 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E	111 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E	121 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E	131 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E	141 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E
102 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E	112 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E	122 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E	132 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E	142 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E
103 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E	113 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E	123 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E	133 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E	143 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E
104 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E	114 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E	124 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E	134 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E	144 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E
105 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E	115 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E	125 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E	135 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E	145 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E
106 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E	116 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E	126 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E	136 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E	146 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E
107 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E	117 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E	127 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E	137 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E	147 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E
108 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E	118 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E	128 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E	138 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E	148 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E
109 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E	119 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E	129 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E	139 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E	149 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E
110 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E	120 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E	130 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E	140 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E	150 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E
151 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E	161 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E	171 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E	181 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E	191 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E
152 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E	162 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E	172 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E	182 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E	192 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E
153 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E	163 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E	173 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E	183 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E	193 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E
154 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E	164 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E	174 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E	184 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E	194 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E
155 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E	165 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E	175 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E	185 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E	195 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E
156 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E	166 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E	176 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E	186 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E	196 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E
157 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E	167 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E	177 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E	187 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E	197 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E
158 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E	168 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E	178 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E	188 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E	198 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E
159 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E	169 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E	179 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E	189 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E	199 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E
160 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E	170 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E	180 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E	190 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E	200 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E

Time-Optics by NCS form-4521 6804716

Printed in U.S.A.

© 1977 by National Computer Systems, Inc.

Figure 9

RSI Computer Answer Sheet, page 2

1998 LENTEN SERIES

Here is the schedule for our Lenten Series, "a smorgasbord of small group experiences" taking place in Trotter Hall. The potluck dinner is from 5:45 to 6:30 p.m. and then the "group de jour" is from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.

March 5 Guided Imagery - Walt Dilg will lead the participants in a form of prayer in which the one who prays is talked through a variety of mental images, scenes, and encounters.

March 12 Lectio Divina - Amy Aitken will lead this Bible Study group which focuses upon the spontaneous movement of the Spirit as participants encounter the Word.

March 19 Covenant Discipleship - Walt Dilg & Phyllis Tyler-Wayman will invite the participants to join in a style of spiritual growth group created by John Wesley in which people discussed the state of their souls.

March 26 Talk Walking - Rick Pearson will lead this servant ministry group as the participants role up their sleeves and actually engage in a service activity to others.

April 2 Praying the Office - Amy Aitken will lead the participants in this classical and time honored form of worship.

EXTENDED SMALL GROUP EXPERIENCES

April 12-19 Sign-ups for extended Small Group experiences

Participants of the Lenten Series and other interested folk will have the opportunity to sign up for a particular type of small group for an extended time of small group experience.

April 19 - June 13 Small Group Experiences

Each type of small group sampled in the smorgasbord will be offered during this time. Each type of group will meet once per week for the eight week period. A brief questionnaire will be administered to the participants at the start and the end of the eight week period to help evaluate the effectiveness of the group experience for the participants.

Figure 10
Publicity Flier, A

HOLY WEEK OPPORTUNITIES

Maundy Thursday - April 9

Lord's Supper Sanctuary 7 pm

Good Friday - April 10

Prayer Vigil Chapel 6 am to 6 pm
 Labyrinth Trotter Hall 6 am to 6 pm
 Fauve's "Requiem" Sanctuary 7 pm

Holy Saturday - April 11

Easter Egg Hunt Courtyard 10 am to 1 pm
 Prayer Vigil Chapel 6 am to 6 pm
 Labyrinth Trotter Hall 6 am to 6 pm

Easter Sunday - April 12

Sunrise Service Chapel 6:30 am
 Traditional Celebration Sanctuary 9:00 am
 Contemporary Celebration Chapel 11:00 am

Figure 11

Publicity Flier, B

“Good News” from **First United Methodist Church**

1338 East Santa Clara Street, Ventura, California 93001, 805/643-8621

LENTEN SERIES UPCOMING “Good News” 1-28-98

A creatively different Lenten Series is being planned by Pastors Walt and Amy for our members and friends at First Church and College UMC. Yes, that’s right! Pastor Phyllis has indicated an eagerness to join forces with us for this Lenten study.

Bracketed by the worship experiences of Ash Wednesday and Maundy Thursday, the five week Lenten Series will be a smorgasbord of small group spiritual growth experiences. Following a typically tasty Methodist potluck, each week a different type of small group experience will be offered for our exposure and sampling. We’ll do Lectio Divina, Guided Imagery, Praying the Office, Covenant Discipleship, and Talk-Walking. More information will be forthcoming in our newsletter about these different groups.

For now ... save the Thursdays of Lent (March 5 - April 2) and the time (5:45-7:30 p.m.) on your calendar for food, fellowship, and faith development at First Church. It will be a great experience, and particularly good to join together with our connectional brothers and sisters from College.

“Good News”
2-11-98

LENTEN SERIES NEARING

Our “smorgasbord of small groups” Lenten Series is right around the corner. The series runs on Thursdays, March 5 through April 2. We will enjoy a potluck dinner from 5:45 to 6:30 and then the small group of the week from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. Here’s the plans:

Date	Type of Group	Leader
March 5	Guided Imagery	Walt Dilg
March 12	Lectio Divina	Amy Aitken
March 19	Covenant Discipleship	Walt Dilg & Phyllis Tyler-Wayman
March 26	Talk Walking	Rick Pearson
April 2	Praying the Office	Amy Aitken

Following Easter, we will get the opportunity to join an extended version of one of these groups. We plan to offer all five styles of small groups each week for the eight weeks between Easter and the end of the school year. This will provide you the time to really get involved in one type of spiritual discipline and see how it helps to strengthen your soul and grow forward your spirit toward more faithful discipleship.

Figure 12

Newsletter Articles: 1/28/98 and 2/11/98

WORDS FROM WALT: Dancing with the Spirit

The enthusiasm around First Church is bubbling over because of two very exciting programs. I hope you are hearing the beat, catching the Spirit, and letting your soul dance.

The first is our Long Range Planning - Vision 2000 process which is off and running. Our group of twelve disciples are meeting regularly and seeking their best to get in step with the Spirit's leading. They are doing great work and now seek some input from you. Sunday, March 1 is being called "Envisioning Sunday." On this Sunday, our LRP team will be asking you to dance with the Spirit by envisioning First Church in the year 2000. What do you imagine our average worship attendance and our average Sunday School attendance will be? Help our LRP process along by joining us for worship this Sunday and registering your vision of First Church.

The second exciting program is our Lenten Series. You have heard and read about it often these recent weeks. Now it has arrived. The smorgasbord of small groups begins the first Thursday of March and will continue for the next 5 weeks. They promise to be exhilarating experiences for your soul, as you are invited to dance with the Spirit in a variety of interesting ways. Then following Easter, we will have the opportunity to join an eight week extended experience in the group of our choice. The opportunities for spiritual growth are boundless.

This Spring at First Church is an incredibly exciting time. Be a part of the excitement and enjoy some good dancing with the Spirit.

2-25-98

"Good News", Ventura First United Methodist Church

Page Three

LENTEN SMORGASBORD SERIES

Our Lenten Series, "smorgasbord of small groups" will be beginning next week. Already many are excited about participating in this creative program of spiritual growth opportunities. Starting March 5 and continuing every Thursday until April 2, we will have a potluck dinner from 5:45 to 6:30 and then the "group de jour" from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. The schedule is as follows:

March 5 Guided Imagery - Walt Dilg will lead the participants in a form of prayer in which the one who prays is talked through a variety of mental images, scenes, and encounters.

March 12 Lectio Divina - Amy Aitken will lead this Bible Study group which is focused upon the spontaneous movement of the Spirit as participants encounter the Word.

March 19 Covenant Discipleship - Walt Dilg & Phyllis Tyler-Wayman will invite the participants to join in a style of spiritual growth group created by John Wesley in which people discussed the state of their souls.

March 26 Talk Walking - Rick Pearson will lead this servant ministry group as the participants roll up their sleeves and actually engage in a service activity to others.

April 2 Praying the Office - Amy Aitken will lead the participants in this classical and time-honored form of worship.

Remember that, after Easter, an extended version of one of these groups will be offered. For those next eight weeks, we will participate in the particular group of our choosing. This way, we will get an in-depth experience of one of these great spiritual growth disciples, and our time between Easter and Pentecost will have been fruitfully engaged in growing forward our souls.

Figure 13**Newsletter Articles: 2/25/98**

LENTEN SMORGASBORD SERIES

Our Lenten Series, "smorgasbord of small groups" is continuing. Already we have had one or two exciting small group experiences. It's not too late to participate in the upcoming groups. Continuing every Thursday until April 2, we will have a potluck dinner from 5:45 to 6:30 and then the "group de jour" from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. The remaining schedule is as follows:

March 19 Covenant Discipleship - Walt Dilg & Phyllis Tyler-Wayman will invite the participants to join in a style of spiritual growth group created by John Wesley in which people discussed the state of their souls.

March 26 Talk Walking - Rick Pearson will lead this servant ministry group as the participants roll up their sleeves and actually engage in a service activity to others.

April 2 Praying the Office - Amy Aitken will lead the participants in this classical and time-honored form of worship.

Remember ... immediately after Easter, we will be invited to choose a particular type of group from the smorgasbord and participate in an eight week session of it. This way, we will get an in-depth experience of one of these great spiritual growth disciplines, and our time between Easter and Pentecost will have been fruitfully engaged in growing forward our soul.

"Good News"
3-25-98

LENTEN SMORGASBORD SERIES

Our final Lenten Series, "smorgasbord of small groups" is April 2 when we will have a potluck dinner from 5:45 to 6:30 and then the "group de jour" from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. The remaining schedule is as follows:

April 2 Praying the Office - Amy Aitken will lead the participants in this classical and time-honored form of worship.

Remember ... immediately after Easter, we will be invited to choose a particular type of group from the smorgasbord and participate in an eight week session of it. This way, we will get an in-depth experience of one of these great spiritual growth disciplines, and our time between Easter and Pentecost will have been fruitfully engaged in growing forward our soul.

Figure 14

Newsletter Articles: 3/11/98 and 3/25/98

COVENANT OF DISCIPLESHIP

Knowing that Jesus Christ died that I might have eternal life,
I herewith pledge myself to be his disciple, witnessing to his saving grace, and
seeking to follow his teachings under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.
I faithfully pledge my time, my skills, my resources, and my strength,
to search out God's will for me, and to obey.

I will worship each Sunday unless prevented.

I will pray each day, privately.

I will pray with my family or with friends several times a week.

I will read and study scriptures each day.

I will return to Christ an increased portion of all I receive.

*I will spend four hours each month to further the cause
of the disadvantaged in my community.*

When I am aware of injustice to others, I will not remain silent.

I will obey the promptings of the Holy Spirit to serve God and my neighbor.

I will heed the warnings of the Holy Spirit not to sin against God and my neighbor.

I will prayerfully care for my body.

I will prayerfully care for the world in which I live.

I hereby make my commitment, trusting in the grace of God
to give me the will and the strength to keep this covenant.

(signature)

(date)

Figure 15

Covenant of Discipleship for Covenant Discipleship Group A

COVENANT OF DISCIPLESHIP - 2

Knowing that Jesus Christ died that I might have eternal life,
I herewith pledge myself to be his disciple, witnessing to his saving grace, and
seeking to follow his teachings under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.
I faithfully pledge my time, my skills, my resources, and my strength,
to search out God's will for me, and to obey.

I will worship each Sunday unless prevented.

*I will receive the sacrament of Holy Communion each week,
by arriving to our sessions fifteen minutes early.*

I will pray each day, privately, and with my family or with friends several times a week.

I will read and study scriptures each day.

I will return to Christ an increased portion of all I receive.

*I will spend four hours each month to further the cause
of the disadvantaged in my community.*

When I am aware of injustice to others, I will not remain silent.

I will obey the promptings of the Holy Spirit to serve God and my neighbor.

I will heed the warnings of the Holy Spirit not to sin against God and my neighbor.

I will prayerfully care for my body.

I will prayerfully care for the world in which I live.

I will verbally share my faith in some fashion each week.

I hereby make my commitment, trusting in the grace of God
to give me the will and the strength to keep this covenant.

(signature)

(date)

Figure 16

Covenant of Discipleship for Covenant Discipleship Group B

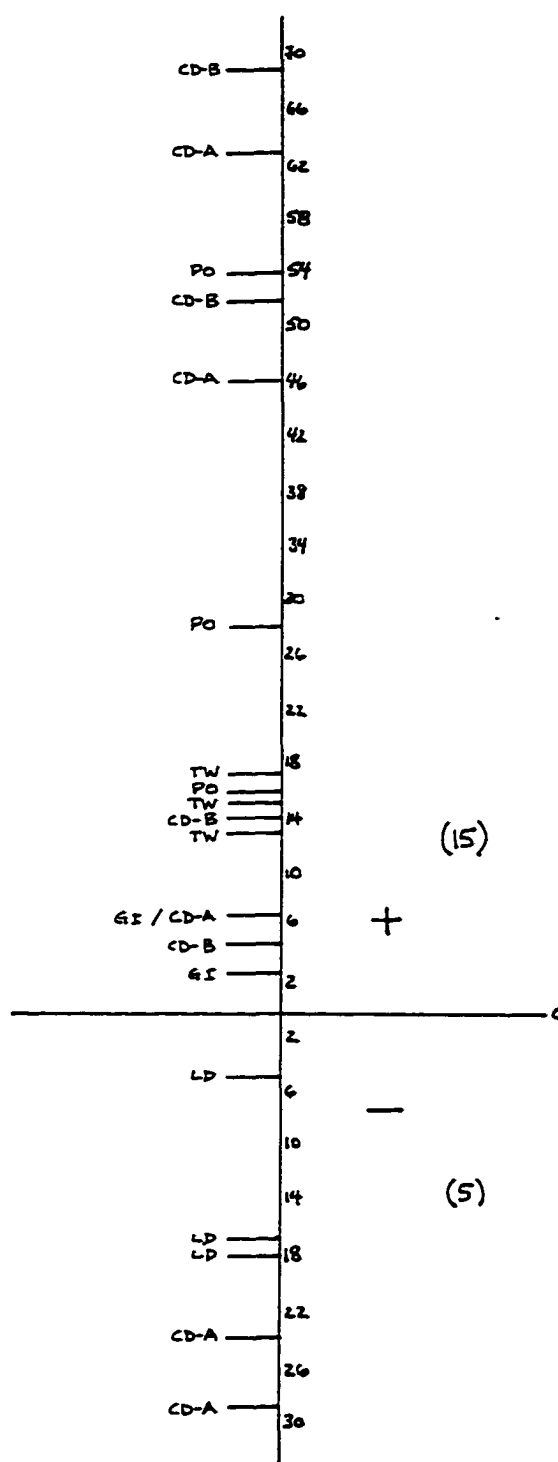


Figure 17

Mean Change Scores per Participant Noting Group Membership

APPENDIX B

Research Data

Appendix B contains the computer printout of the RSI scores and analyses. It follows in the order of the summary sheet presented first and then the sheets for the twenty-two participants.

Means, Standard Deviations, and Ranges for Pre, Post, and Difference RSI scores and Church Activities, Health Description, and Physical Attentiveness.

	Pre Mean Scores	Pre Standard Deviation	Pre Range	Post Mean Score	Post Standard Deviation	Post Range	Difference Score Means	Difference Standard Deviation	Difference Range
RSI Total	630.91	60.71	485 to 719	630.05	83.55	317 to 706	-0.86	71.11	-299 to 69
Factor 1	109.18	25.61	76 to 171	111.23	39.36	80 to 263	2.05	32.97	-41 to 135
Factor 2	173.68	29.74	106 to 218	174.73	32.81	81 to 212	1.05	25.94	-96 to 38
Factor 3	25.73	4.35	15 to 31	24.73	5.05	13 to 34	-1.00	4.29	-15 to 7
Factor 4	15.27	4.65	7 to 26	16.09	4.94	7 to 25	0.82	3.69	-8 to 9
Factor 5	16.09	4.36	10 to 24	16.36	3.87	10 to 24	0.27	3.49	-11 to 8
Factor 6	20.86	3.00	15 to 25	20.82	2.82	13 to 25	-0.05	2.01	-4 to 3
Factor 7	189.77	33.18	116 to 240	191.09	35.54	92 to 236	1.32	28.94	-107 to 43
Awareness of God	79.05	11.02	54 to 90	78.64	13.63	33 to 91	-0.41	12.19	-50 to 15
Grace/Love	80.32	9.90	61 to 95	78.41	12.18	41 to 93	-1.91	9.36	-37 to 11
Repentant/Re sponsible	74.55	7.48	59 to 88	75.09	8.22	55 to 92	0.55	4.39	-8 to 8
Leadership and Doctrine	83.36	10.62	55 to 96	84.09	13.56	38 to 98	0.73	10.71	-38 to 14
Organized Religion	82.82	10.20	57 to 100	83.55	14.33	33 to 97	0.73	12.09	-46 to 20
Experiencing Fellowship	82.73	6.05	71 to 93	82.59	12.55	31 to 94	-0.14	12.96	-55 to 10
Ethical	74.00	9.04	56 to 91	73.14	8.33	49 to 87	-0.86	8.67	-27 to 17
Affirming Openness	74.09	10.48	53 to 94	74.55	11.48	37 to 90	0.45	10.33	-42 to 13
Church Activities	3.91	1.08	2 to 5	4.05	1.11	1 to 5	0.14	1.10	-4 to 2
Health Description	4.05	0.71	3 to 5	3.91	0.60	3 to 5	-0.14	0.46	-1 to 1
Physical Attentiveness	3.73	1.14	1 to 5	4.00	0.85	2 to 5	0.27	1.05	-1 to 4

Table 13

RSI Summary Score Sheet

01

ALL

Table 14

RSI Participant 1 Score Sheet

	Pre Mean Scores	Pre Range	Individual Pre Score	Post Mean Score	Post Range	Individual Post Score	Difference Score Means	Difference Range	Individual Difference Score
RSI Total	630.91	485 to 719	664	630.05	317 to 706	628	-0.86	-299 to 69	-36
Factor 1	109.18	76 to 171	106	111.23	80 to 263	119	2.05	-41 to 135	13
Factor 2	173.68	106 to 218	198	174.73	81 to 212	177	1.05	-96 to 38	-21
Factor 3	25.73	15 to 31	27	24.73	13 to 34	28	-1.00	-15 to 7	1
Factor 4	15.27	7 to 26	14	16.09	7 to 25	15	0.82	-8 to 9	1
Factor 5	16.09	10 to 24	22	16.36	10 to 24	22	0.27	-11 to 8	0
Factor 6	20.86	15 to 25	21	20.82	13 to 25	21	-0.05	-4 to 3	0
Factor 7	189.77	116 to 240	220	181.09	92 to 236	199	1.32	-107 to 43	-21
Awareness of God	79.05	54 to 90	89	78.64	33 to 91	83	-0.41	-50 to 15	-6
Grace/Love	80.32	61 to 95	83	78.41	41 to 93	75	-1.91	-37 to 11	-8
Repentant/Re sponsible	74.55	59 to 88	70	75.09	55 to 92	73	0.55	-8 to 8	3
Leadership and Doctrine	83.36	55 to 96	93	84.09	38 to 98	83	0.73	-38 to 14	-10
Organized Religion	82.82	57 to 100	88	83.55	33 to 97	83	0.73	-46 to 20	-5
Experiencing Fellowship	82.73	71 to 93	77	82.59	31 to 94	76	-0.14	-55 to 10	-1
Ethical	74.00	56 to 91	79	73.14	49 to 87	73	-0.86	-27 to 17	-6
Affirming Openness	74.09	53 to 94	85	74.55	37 to 90	82	0.45	-42 to 13	-3
Church Activities	3.91	2 to 5	5	4.05	1 to 5	5	0.14	-4 to 2	0
Health Description	4.05	3 to 5	4	3.91	3 to 5	4	-0.14	-1 to 1	0
Physical Attentiveness	3.73	1 to 5	2	4.00	2 to 5	4	0.27	-1 to 4	2

02

TATA WMSA

	Pre Mean Scores	Pre Range	Individual Pre Score	Post Mean Score	Post Range	Individual Post Score	Difference Score Means	Difference Range	Individual Difference Score
RSI Total	630.91	485 to 719	678	630.05	317 to 706	693	-0.86	-299 to 69	15
Factor 1	109.18	76 to 171	112	111.23	80 to 263	87	2.05	-41 to 135	-25
Factor 2	173.68	106 to 218	205	174.73	81 to 212	199	1.05	-96 to 38	-6
Factor 3	25.73	15 to 31	28	24.73	13 to 34	20	-1.00	-15 to 7	-6
Factor 4	15.27	7 to 26	12	16.09	7 to 25	12	0.82	-8 to 9	0
Factor 5	16.09	10 to 24	16	16.36	10 to 24	16	0.27	-11 to 8	0
Factor 6	20.86	15 to 25	23	20.82	13 to 25	19	-0.05	-4 to 3	-4
Factor 7	189.77	116 to 240	221	191.09	92 to 236	215	1.32	-107 to 43	-6
Awareness of God	79.05	54 to 90	86	78.64	33 to 91	90	-0.41	-50 to 15	4
Grace/Love	80.32	61 to 95	88	78.41	41 to 93	88	-1.91	-37 to 11	0
Repentant/Responsible	74.55	59 to 88	87	75.09	55 to 92	79	0.55	-8 to 8	-8
Leadership and Doctrine	83.36	55 to 96	94	84.09	38 to 98	90	0.73	-38 to 14	-4
Organized Religion	82.82	57 to 100	83	83.55	33 to 97	93	0.73	-46 to 20	10
Experiencing Fellowship	82.73	71 to 93	83	82.59	31 to 94	93	-0.14	-55 to 10	10
Ethical	74.00	56 to 91	76	73.14	49 to 87	76	-0.86	-27 to 17	1
Affirming Openness	74.09	53 to 94	82	74.55	37 to 90	84	0.45	-42 to 13	2
Church Activities	3.91	2 to 5	5	4.05	1 to 5	5	0.14	-4 to 2	0
Health Description	4.05	3 to 5	5	3.91	3 to 5	4	-0.14	-1 to 1	-1
Physical Attentiveness	3.73	1 to 5	5	4.00	2 to 5	5	0.27	-1 to 4	0

Table 15
RSI Participant 2 Score Sheet

03

Total with Rep

	Pre Mean Scores	Pre Range	Individual Pre Score	Post Mean Score	Post Range	Individual Post Score	Difference Score Means	Difference Range	Individual Difference Score
RSI Total	630.91	485 to 719	596	630.05	317 to 706	613	-0.86	-299 to 89	17
Factor 1	109.18	76 to 171	95	111.23	80 to 263	95	2.05	-41 to 135	0
Factor 2	173.68	106 to 218	140	174.73	81 to 212	142	1.05	-96 to 38	2
Factor 3	25.73	15 to 31	15	24.73	13 to 34	15	-1.00	-15 to 7	0
Factor 4	15.27	7 to 26	7	16.09	7 to 25	7	0.82	-8 to 9	0
Factor 5	16.09	10 to 24	13	16.36	10 to 24	12	0.27	-11 to 8	-1
Factor 6	20.86	15.25	26	20.82	13 to 25	26	-0.05	-4 to 3	0
Factor 7	189.77	116 to 240	163	191.09	92 to 236	164	1.32	-107 to 43	1
Awareness of God	78.05	54 to 90	72	78.64	33 to 91	78	-0.41	-50 to 15	6
Grace/Love	80.32	61 to 95	72	78.41	41 to 93	78	-1.91	-37 to 11	6
Repentant/Responsible Leadership	74.55	59 to 88	72	75.09	55 to 92	72	0.55	-8 to 8	0
Organized Religion	83.36	55 to 96	68	84.09	38 to 98	72	0.73	-38 to 14	4
Experiencing Fellowship	82.82	57 to 100	88	83.55	33 to 97	83	0.73	-46 to 20	-5
Ethical	82.73	71 to 83	84	82.59	31 to 94	88	-0.14	-55 to 10	4
Affirming Openness	74.00	56 to 81	72	73.14	49 to 87	72	-0.86	-27 to 17	0
Church Activities	74.09	53 to 84	68	74.55	37 to 90	70	0.45	-42 to 13	2
Health Description	3.91	2 to 5	3	4.05	1 to 5	3	0.14	-4 to 2	0
Physical Attentiveness	4.05	3 to 5	5	3.91	3 to 5	4	-0.14	-1 to 1	-1
	3.73	1 to 5	5	4.00	2 to 5	5	0.27	-1 to 4	0

Table 16

RSI Participant 3 Score Sheet

04

TALK WALKER

	Pre Mean Scores	Pre Range	Individual Pre Score	Post Mean Score	Post Range	Individual Post Score	Difference Score Means	Difference Range	Individual Difference Score
RSI Total	630.91	485 to 719	647	630.05	317 to 706	660	-0.86	-299 to 69	13
Factor 1	109.18	76 to 171	91	111.23	80 to 263	97	2.05	-41 to 135	6
Factor 2	173.68	106 to 218	175	174.73	81 to 212	176	1.05	-98 to 38	1
Factor 3	25.73	15 to 31	30	24.73	13 to 34	29	-1.00	-15 to 7	-1
Factor 4	15.27	7 to 26	18	16.09	7 to 25	18	0.82	-8 to 9	0
Factor 5	16.09	10 to 24	13	16.36	10 to 24	17	0.27	-11 to 8	4
Factor 6	20.86	15 to 25	20	20.82	13 to 25	22	-0.05	-4 to 3	2
Factor 7	189.77	116 to 240	188	191.09	92 to 236	193	1.32	-107 to 43	5
Awareness of God	79.05	64 to 90	81	78.64	33 to 91	79	-0.41	-50 to 16	-2
Grace/Love	80.32	61 to 95	84	78.41	41 to 93	81	-1.91	-37 to 11	-3
Repentant/Responsible	74.55	59 to 88	81	75.09	55 to 92	84	0.55	-8 to 8	3
Leadership and Doctrine	83.36	55 to 96	88	84.09	38 to 98	89	0.73	-38 to 14	1
Organized Religion	82.82	57 to 100	84	83.55	33 to 97	88	0.73	-46 to 20	4
Experiencing Fellowship	82.73	71 to 93	88	82.59	31 to 94	90	-0.14	-55 to 10	2
Ethical	74.00	56 to 91	72	73.14	49 to 87	77	-0.86	-27 to 17	5
Affirming Openness	74.09	53 to 94	69	74.55	37 to 90	72	0.45	-42 to 13	3
Church Activities	3.91	2 to 5	4	4.05	1 to 5	5	0.14	-4 to 2	1
Health	4.05	3 to 5	4	3.91	3 to 5	3	-0.14	-1 to 1	-1
Physical Attentiveness	3.73	1 to 5	3	4.00	2 to 5	3	0.27	-1 to 4	0

Table 17

RSI Participant 4 Score Sheet

05 *CONCRETE DISCIPLESHIP (4)*

	Pre Mean Scores	Pre Range	Individual Pre Score	Post Mean Score	Post Range	Individual Post Score	Difference Score Means	Difference Range	Individual Difference Score
RSI Total	630.91	485 to 719	690	630.05	317 to 706	661	-0.86	-299 to 69	-29
Factor 1	109.18	76 to 171	92	111.23	80 to 263	97	2.05	-41 to 135	5
Factor 2	173.68	106 to 218	191	174.73	81 to 212	181	1.05	-96 to 38	-10
Factor 3	25.73	15 to 31	29	24.73	13 to 34	25	-1.00	-15 to 7	-4
Factor 4	15.27	7 to 26	14	16.09	7 to 25	17	0.82	-8 to 9	-3
Factor 5	16.09	10 to 24	17	16.36	10 to 24	18	0.27	-11 to 8	1
Factor 6	20.86	15 to 25	21	20.82	13 to 25	19	-0.05	-4 to 3	-2
Factor 7	189.77	116 to 240	208	191.09	92 to 236	199	1.32	-107 to 43	-9
Awareness of God	79.05	54 to 90	87	76.64	33 to 91	79	-0.41	-50 to 15	-8
Grace/Love	80.32	61 to 95	86	78.41	41 to 93	83	-1.91	-37 to 11	-3
Repentant/Responsible	74.55	59 to 88	70	75.09	55 to 92	66	0.55	-8 to 8	-4
Leadership and Doctrine	83.36	55 to 96	92	84.09	38 to 88	85	0.73	-38 to 14	-7
Organized Religion	82.82	57 to 100	93	83.55	33 to 87	90	0.73	-46 to 20	-3
Experiencing Fellowship	82.73	71 to 93	88	82.59	31 to 94	90	-0.14	-55 to 10	2
Ethical	74.00	56 to 91	91	73.14	49 to 87	82	-0.86	-27 to 17	-9
Affirming	74.09	53 to 94	93	74.55	37 to 90	86	0.45	-42 to 13	-6
Openness	3.91	2 to 5	4	4.05	1 to 5	4	0.14	-4 to 2	0
Church Activities	4.05	3 to 5	4	3.91	3 to 5	4	-0.14	-1 to 1	0
Health	3.73	1 to 5	2	4.00	2 to 5	3	0.27	-1 to 4	1

Table 18

RSI Participant 5 Score Sheet

06 CROEWANT DIKIDLESMTA(N

	Pre Mean Scores	Pre Range	Individual Pre Score	Post Mean Score	Post Range	Individual Post Score	Difference Score Means	Difference Range	Individual Difference Score
RSI Total	630.91	485 to 719	582	630.05	317 to 706	608	-0.86	-299 to 69	48
Factor 1	109.18	76 to 171	134	111.23	80 to 263	106	2.05	-41 to 135	-28
Factor 2	173.68	106 to 218	126	174.73	81 to 212	144	1.05	-96 to 38	18
Factor 3	25.73	15 to 31	26	24.73	13 to 34	23	-1.00	-15 to 7	-3
Factor 4	15.27	7 to 26	8	16.09	7 to 25	8	0.82	-8 to 9	0
Factor 5	16.09	10 to 24	13	16.36	10 to 24	14	0.27	-11 to 8	1
Factor 6	20.86	15 to 25	20	20.82	13 to 25	21	-0.05	-4 to 3	1
Factor 7	189.77	116 to 240	139	191.09	92 to 236	158	1.32	-107 to 43	19
Awareness of God	79.05	64 to 80	60	78.64	33 to 91	71	-0.41	-50 to 16	11
Grace/Love	80.32	61 to 85	61	78.41	41 to 93	63	-1.91	-37 to 11	2
Repentant/Responsible	74.55	59 to 88	77	75.09	55 to 92	79	0.55	-8 to 8	2
Leadership and Doctrine	83.36	55 to 86	73	84.09	38 to 98	85	0.73	-38 to 14	12
Organized Religion	82.82	57 to 100	83	83.55	33 to 97	85	0.73	-46 to 20	2
Experiencing Fellowship	82.73	71 to 83	72	82.59	31 to 94	78	-0.14	-55 to 10	6
Ethical	74.00	56 to 91	81	73.14	49 to 87	79	-0.86	-27 to 17	-2
Affirming Openness	74.09	53 to 94	55	74.55	37 to 90	68	0.45	-42 to 13	13
Church Activities	3.91	2 to 5	3	4.05	1 to 5	4	0.14	-4 to 2	1
Health Description	4.05	3 to 5	3	3.91	3 to 5	4	-0.14	-1 to 1	1
Physical Attentiveness	3.73	1 to 5	3	4.00	2 to 5	4	0.27	-1 to 4	1

Table 19
RSI Participant 6 Score Sheet

07

CONJUNTA DINKALESHIP (A)

	Pre Mean Scores	Pre Range	Individual Pre Score	Post Mean Score	Post Range	Individual Post Score	Difference Score Means	Difference Range	Individual Difference Score
RSI Total	630.91	485 to 719	707	630.05	317 to 706	683	-0.86	-299 to 69	-24
Factor 1	109.18	76 to 171	76	111.23	80 to 263	97	2.05	-41 to 135	21
Factor 2	173.68	106 to 218	202	174.73	81 to 212	196	1.05	-96 to 38	-6
Factor 3	25.73	15 to 31	28	24.73	13 to 34	32	-1.00	-15 to 7	3
Factor 4	15.27	7 to 26	18	16.09	7 to 25	10	0.82	-8 to 9	-8
Factor 5	16.09	10 to 24	18	16.36	10 to 24	13	0.27	-11 to 8	-5
Factor 6	20.86	15.25	26	20.82	13 to 25	21	-0.05	-4 to 3	-4
Factor 7	189.77	116 to 240	220	191.09	92 to 236	209	1.32	-107 to 43	-11
Awareness of God	79.05	64 to 90	84	78.64	33 to 91	91	-0.41	-50 to 15	7
Grace/Love	80.32	61 to 95	92	78.41	41 to 93	88	-1.91	-37 to 11	-4
Repentant/Responsible	74.55	59 to 88	86	75.09	55 to 92	92	0.55	-8 to 8	7
Leadership and Doctrine	83.36	65 to 86	86	84.09	38 to 98	96	0.73	-38 to 14	0
Organized Religion	82.82	57 to 100	91	83.55	33 to 97	85	0.73	-46 to 20	-6
Experiencing Fellowship	82.73	71 to 83	88	82.59	31 to 94	79	-0.14	-55 to 10	-9
Ethical	74.00	56 to 81	88	73.14	49 to 87	72	-0.86	-27 to 17	-16
Affirming Openness	74.09	53 to 84	83	74.55	37 to 90	80	0.45	-42 to 13	3
Church Activities	3.91	2 to 5	4	4.05	1 to 5	4	0.14	-4 to 2	0
Health	4.05	3 to 5	4	3.91	3 to 5	4	-0.14	-1 to 1	0
Physical Attentiveness	3.73	1 to 5	4	4.00	2 to 5	4	0.27	-1 to 4	0

Table 20

RSI Participant 7 Score Sheet

08 CONSUMANT DELIRIUM (LA)

	Pre Mean Scores	Pre Range	Individual Pre Score	Post Mean Score	Post Range	Individual Post Score	Difference Score Means	Difference Range	Individual Difference Score
RSI Total	630.91	485 to 719	533	630.05	317 to 706	596	-0.86	-299 to 69	63
Factor 1	109.18	76 to 171	184	111.23	80 to 263	158	2.05	-41 to 135	4
Factor 2	173.68	106 to 218	144	174.73	81 to 212	179	1.05	-96 to 38	35
Factor 3	25.73	15 to 31	30	24.73	13 to 34	31	-1.00	-15 to 7	1
Factor 4	15.27	7 to 26	17	16.09	7 to 25	21	0.82	-8 to 9	4
Factor 5	16.09	10 to 24	11	16.36	10 to 24	19	0.27	-11 to 8	8
Factor 6	20.86	15 to 25	18	20.82	13 to 25	21	-0.05	-4 to 3	3
Factor 7	189.77	116 to 240	185	191.09	92 to 236	198	1.32	-107 to 43	43
Awareness of God	79.05	54 to 80	59	78.64	33 to 91	63	-0.41	-50 to 15	4
Grace/Love	80.32	61 to 95	68	78.41	41 to 93	69	-1.91	-37 to 11	1
Repentant/Responsible	74.55	59 to 88	72	75.09	55 to 92	75	0.55	-8 to 8	3
Leadership and Doctrine	83.36	55 to 96	76	84.09	38 to 98	87	0.73	-38 to 14	12
Organized Religion	82.82	57 to 100	60	83.55	33 to 97	69	0.73	-46 to 20	9
Experiencing Fellowship	82.73	71 to 93	74	82.59	31 to 94	82	-0.14	-55 to 10	8
Ethical	74.00	56 to 91	61	73.14	49 to 87	78	-0.86	-27 to 17	17
Affirming	74.09	53 to 94	64	74.55	37 to 90	73	0.45	-42 to 13	9
Openness	3.91	2 to 5	2	4.05	1 to 5	3	0.14	-4 to 2	1
Church Activities	4.05	3 to 5	3	3.91	3 to 5	3	-0.14	-1 to 1	0
Health	3.73	1 to 5	1	4.00	2 to 5	5	0.27	-1 to 4	4
Description Physical Attentiveness									

Table 21

RSI Participant 8 Score Sheet

COVENANT DISCIPLESHIP (A)

09

	Pre Mean Scores	Pre Range	Individual Pre Score	Post Mean Score	Post Range	Individual Post Score	Difference Score Means	Difference Range	Individual Difference Score
RSI Total	630.91	485 to 719	485	630.05	317 to 706	482	-0.86	-299 to 69	7
Factor 1	109.18	76 to 171	171	111.23	80 to 263	163	2.05	-41 to 135	-8
Factor 2	173.68	106 to 218	108	174.73	81 to 212	102	1.05	-96 to 38	-4
Factor 3	25.73	15 to 31	22	24.73	13 to 34	23	-1.00	-15 to 7	1
Factor 4	15.27	7 to 26	14	16.09	7 to 25	12	0.82	-8 to 9	-2
Factor 5	16.09	10 to 24	10	16.36	10 to 24	11	0.27	-11 to 8	1
Factor 6	20.86	15 to 25	22	20.82	13 to 25	24	-0.05	-4 to 3	2
Factor 7	189.77	116 to 240	116	191.09	92 to 236	113	1.32	-107 to 43	-3
Awareness of God	79.05	54 to 80	54	78.64	33 to 91	53	-0.41	-50 to 15	-1
Grace/Love	80.32	61 to 85	66	78.41	41 to 93	59	-1.91	-37 to 11	-7
Repentant/Responsible	74.55	59 to 88	64	75.09	55 to 92	63	0.55	-8 to 8	-1
Leadership and Doctrine	83.36	55 to 86	55	84.09	38 to 98	58	0.73	-38 to 14	3
Organized Religion	82.82	57 to 100	57	83.55	33 to 97	59	0.73	-46 to 20	2
Experiencing Fellowship	82.73	71 to 83	80	82.59	31 to 94	82	-0.14	-55 to 10	2
Ethical	74.00	56 to 81	56	73.14	49 to 87	63	-0.86	-27 to 17	7
Affirming Openness	74.09	63 to 84	53	74.55	37 to 90	55	0.45	-42 to 13	2
Church Activities	3.91	2 to 5	2	4.05	1 to 5	2	0.14	-4 to 2	0
Health Description	4.05	3 to 5	5	3.91	3 to 5	5	-0.14	-1 to 1	0
Physical Attentiveness	3.73	1 to 5	5	4.00	2 to 5	4	0.27	-1 to 4	-1

Table 22

RSI Participant 9 Score Sheet

10 CONSUMPT DISPLACEMENT CA)

	Pre Mean Scores	Pre Range	Individual Pre Score	Post Mean Score	Post Range	Individual Post Score	Difference Score Means	Difference Range	Individual Difference Score
RSI Total	630.91	485 to 719	571	630.05	317 to 706	640	-0.86	-299 to 69	69
Factor 1	109.18	76 to 171	122	111.23	80 to 263	97	2.05	-41 to 135	-25
Factor 2	173.68	106 to 218	134	174.73	81 to 212	171	1.05	-96 to 38	37
Factor 3	25.73	15 to 31	27	24.73	13 to 34	26	-1.00	-15 to 7	-1
Factor 4	15.27	7 to 26	11	16.09	7 to 25	18	0.82	-8 to 9	7
Factor 5	16.09	10 to 24	12	16.36	10 to 24	16	0.27	-11 to 8	4
Factor 6	20.86	15 to 25	17	20.82	13 to 25	20	-0.05	-4 to 3	3
Factor 7	189.77	116 to 240	148	191.09	92 to 236	187	1.32	-107 to 43	41
Awareness of God	79.05	64 to 90	67	78.64	33 to 91	82	-0.41	-50 to 16	16
Grace/Love	80.32	61 to 85	65	78.41	41 to 93	76	-1.91	-37 to 11	11
Repentance/Responsible	74.55	59 to 88	75	75.09	55 to 92	79	0.55	-8 to 8	4
Leadership and Doctrine	83.36	55 to 96	77	84.09	38 to 98	85	0.73	-38 to 14	8
Organized Religion	82.82	57 to 100	79	83.55	33 to 97	89	0.73	-46 to 20	10
Experiencing Fellowship	82.73	71 to 83	83	82.59	31 to 94	89	-0.14	-55 to 10	6
Ethical	74.00	56 to 81	62	73.14	49 to 87	67	-0.86	-27 to 17	5
Affirming Openness	74.09	53 to 84	63	74.55	37 to 90	73	0.45	-42 to 13	10
Church Activities	3.91	2 to 5	4	4.05	1 to 5	4	0.14	-4 to 2	0
Health Description	4.05	3 to 5	5	3.91	3 to 5	4	-0.14	-1 to 1	-1
Physical Attentiveness	3.73	1 to 5	4	4.00	2 to 5	3	0.27	-1 to 4	-1

Table 23

RSI Participant 10 Score Sheet

11 *CONVARIANT DISCIPLESHIP (A)*

	Pre Mean Scores	Pre Range	Individual Pre Score	Post Mean Score	Post Range	Individual Post Score	Difference Score Means	Difference Range	Individual Difference Score
RSI Total	630.91	485 to 719	653	630.05	317 to 706	605	-0.86	-298 to 69	52
Factor 1	109.18	76 to 171	114	111.23	80 to 263	163	2.05	-41 to 135	-41
Factor 2	173.68	106 to 218	141	174.73	81 to 212	159	1.05	-86 to 38	18
Factor 3	25.73	15 to 31	31	24.73	13 to 34	27	-1.00	-15 to 7	-4
Factor 4	15.27	7 to 26	12	16.09	7 to 25	13	0.82	-8 to 9	1
Factor 5	16.09	10 to 24	10	16.36	10 to 24	10	0.27	-11 to 8	0
Factor 6	20.86	15 to 25	20	20.82	13 to 25	19	-0.05	-4 to 3	-1
Factor 7	189.77	116 to 240	151	191.09	92 to 236	169	1.32	-107 to 43	18
Awareness of God	79.05	54 to 90	68	78.64	33 to 91	76	-0.41	-50 to 16	8
Grace/Love	80.32	61 to 95	73	78.41	41 to 93	80	-1.91	-37 to 11	7
Repentant/Responsible	74.55	59 to 88	74	75.09	55 to 92	73	0.55	-8 to 8	-1
Leadership and Doctrine	83.36	55 to 96	69	84.09	38 to 98	78	0.73	-38 to 14	9
Organized Religion	82.82	57 to 100	73	83.55	33 to 97	82	0.73	-46 to 20	9
Experiencing Fellowship	82.73	71 to 93	71	82.59	31 to 94	81	-0.14	-55 to 10	10
Ethical	74.00	56 to 81	63	73.14	49 to 87	66	-0.86	-27 to 17	3
Affirming	74.09	53 to 94	62	74.55	37 to 90	69	0.45	-42 to 13	7
Openness	3.91	2 to 5	3	4.05	1 to 5	4	0.14	-4 to 2	1
Church Activities	4.05	3 to 5	4	3.91	3 to 5	4	-0.14	-1 to 1	0
Health	3.73	1 to 5	3	4.00	2 to 5	3	0.27	-1 to 4	0
Physical Attentiveness									

Table 24
RSI Participant 11 Score Sheet

COVENANT DISCIPLESHIP (C)

12

	Pre Mean Scores	Pre Range	Individual Pre Score	Post Mean Score	Post Range	Individual Post Score	Difference Score Means	Difference Range	Individual Difference Score
RSI Total	630.91	485 to 719	590	630.05	317 to 706	604	-0.86	-299 to 69	14
Factor 1	109.18	76 to 171	143	111.23	80 to 263	128	2.05	-41 to 135	-15
Factor 2	173.68	106 to 218	173	174.73	81 to 212	174	1.05	-96 to 38	1
Factor 3	25.73	15 to 31	29	24.73	13 to 34	28	-1.00	-15 to 7	-1
Factor 4	15.27	7 to 26	18	16.09	7 to 25	22	0.82	-8 to 9	4
Factor 5	16.09	10 to 24	19	16.36	10 to 24	19	0.27	-11 to 8	0
Factor 6	20.86	15 to 25	18	20.82	13 to 25	17	-0.05	-4 to 3	-1
Factor 7	189.77	116 to 240	192	191.09	92 to 236	193	1.32	-107 to 43	1
Awareness of God	79.05	64 to 80	68	78.64	33 to 91	72	-0.41	-50 to 15	4
Grace/Love	80.32	61 to 95	68	78.41	41 to 93	65	-1.91	-37 to 11	-3
Repentant/Responsible	74.55	59 to 88	66	75.09	55 to 92	61	0.55	-8 to 8	-5
Leadership and Doctrine	83.36	55 to 96	80	84.09	38 to 98	81	0.73	-38 to 14	1
Organized Religion	82.82	57 to 100	87	83.55	33 to 97	88	0.73	-46 to 20	1
Experiencing Fellowship	82.73	71 to 93	87	82.59	31 to 94	88	-0.14	-55 to 10	1
Ethical	74.00	56 to 91	67	73.14	49 to 87	75	-0.86	-27 to 17	8
Affirming Openness	74.09	53 to 94	67	74.55	37 to 90	74	0.45	-42 to 13	7
Church Activities	3.91	2 to 5	5	4.05	1 to 5	5	0.14	-4 to 2	0
Health Description	4.05	3 to 5	4	3.91	3 to 5	4	-0.14	-1 to 1	0
Physical Attentiveness	3.73	1 to 5	4	4.00	2 to 5	4	0.27	-1 to 4	0

Table 25

RSI Participant 12 Score Sheet

13 *CONCURRENT DISCIPLINING CQ*

	Pre Mean Scores	Pre Range	Individual Pre Score	Post Mean Score	Post Range	Individual Post Score	Difference Score Means	Difference Range	Individual Difference Score
RSI Total	630.91	485 to 719	672	630.05	317 to 706	677	-0.86	-299 to 69	5
Factor 1	109.18	76 to 171	113	111.23	80 to 263	98	2.05	-41 to 135	-15
Factor 2	173.68	106 to 218	199	174.73	81 to 212	198	1.05	-96 to 38	-1
Factor 3	25.73	15 to 31	28	24.73	13 to 34	27	-1.00	-15 to 7	-1
Factor 4	15.27	7 to 26	19	16.09	7 to 25	19	0.82	-8 to 9	0
Factor 5	16.09	10 to 24	20	16.36	10 to 24	21	0.27	-11 to 8	1
Factor 6	20.86	15 to 25	24	20.82	13 to 25	24	-0.05	-4 to 3	0
Factor 7	189.77	116 to 240	219	191.09	92 to 236	219	1.32	-107 to 43	0
Awareness of God	79.05	54 to 90	84	78.64	33 to 91	86	-0.41	-50 to 15	2
Grace/Love	80.32	61 to 95	87	78.41	41 to 93	79	-1.91	-37 to 11	-8
Repentant/Re sponsible	74.55	59 to 88	82	75.09	55 to 92	79	0.55	-8 to 8	-3
Leadership	83.36	55 to 86	88	84.09	38 to 98	97	0.73	-38 to 14	9
Organized	82.82	57 to 100	89	83.55	33 to 97	91	0.73	-46 to 20	2
Religion	82.73	71 to 83	86	82.59	31 to 94	91	-0.14	-55 to 10	5
Experiencing	74.00	56 to 81	83	73.14	49 to 87	84	-0.86	-27 to 17	1
Fellowship	74.09	53 to 84	73	74.55	37 to 90	70	0.45	-42 to 13	-3
Affirming	3.91	2 to 5	5	4.05	1 to 5	5	0.14	-4 to 2	0
Church	4.05	3 to 5	4	3.91	3 to 5	4	-0.14	-1 to 1	0
Health	3.73	1 to 5	4	4.00	2 to 5	4	0.27	-1 to 4	0
Physical									
Attentiveness									

Table 26
RSI Participant 13 Score Sheet

RSI Participant 14 Score Sheet

Table 27

	Pre Mean Scores	Pre Range	Individual Pre Score	Post Mean Score	Post Range	Individual Post Score	Difference Score Means	Difference Range	Individual Difference Score
RSI Total	630.91	485 to 719	704	630.05	317 to 706	699	-0.86	-299 to 69	-5
Factor 1	109.18	76 to 171	92	111.23	80 to 263	100	2.05	-41 to 135	8
Factor 2	173.68	106 to 218	207	174.73	81 to 212	212	1.05	-96 to 38	5
Factor 3	25.73	15 to 31	30	24.73	13 to 34	28	-1.00	-15 to 7	-2
Factor 4	15.27	7 to 26	17	16.09	7 to 25	18	0.82	-8 to 9	1
Factor 5	16.09	10 to 24	24	16.36	10 to 24	24	0.27	-11 to 8	0
Factor 6	20.86	15.25	22	20.82	13 to 25	23	-0.05	-4 to 3	1
Factor 7	189.77	116 to 240	231	191.09	92 to 236	236	1.32	-107 to 43	5
Awareness of God	79.05	54 to 90	83	78.64	33 to 91	87	-0.41	-50 to 15	4
Grace/Love	80.32	61 to 95	95	78.41	41 to 93	91	-1.91	-37 to 11	-4
Repentant/Re sponsible	74.55	59 to 88	78	75.09	55 to 92	82	0.55	-8 to 8	4
Leadership and Doctrine	83.36	55 to 96	96	84.09	38 to 98	90	0.73	-38 to 14	-6
Organized Religion	82.82	57 to 100	93	83.55	33 to 97	94	0.73	-46 to 20	1
Experiencing Fellowship	82.73	71 to 93	85	82.59	31 to 94	83	-0.14	-55 to 10	-2
Ethical	74.00	56 to 91	87	73.14	49 to 87	84	-0.86	-27 to 17	-3
Affirming Openness	74.09	53 to 94	87	74.55	37 to 90	88	0.45	-42 to 13	1
Church Activities	3.91	2 to 5	5	4.05	1 to 5	5	0.14	-4 to 2	0
Health Description	4.05	3 to 5	4	3.91	3 to 5	4	- 0.14	- 1 to 1	0
Physical Attentiveness	3.73	1 to 5	5	4.00	2 to 5	5	0.27	-1 to 4	0

15
Kecno Dima

	Pre Mean Scores	Pre Range	Individual Pre Score	Post Mean Score	Post Range	Individual Post Score	Difference Score Means	Difference Range	Individual Difference Score
RSI Total	630.91	485 to 719	616	630.05	317 to 706	317	-0.86	-299 to 69	-299
Factor 1	109.18	76 to 171	128	111.23	80 to 263	263	2.05	-41 to 135	135
Factor 2	173.68	106 to 218	177	174.73	81 to 212	81	1.05	-96 to 38	-96
Factor 3	25.73	15 to 31	28	24.73	13 to 34	13	-1.00	-15 to 7	-15
Factor 4	15.27	7 to 26	16	16.09	7 to 25	25	0.82	-8 to 9	9
Factor 5	16.09	10 to 24	22	16.36	10 to 24	11	0.27	-11 to 8	-11
Factor 6	20.86	15.25	16	20.82	13 to 25	13	-0.05	-4 to 3	-3
Factor 7	189.77	116 to 240	199	191.09	92 to 236	92	1.32	-107 to 43	-107
Awareness of God	79.05	54 to 90	83	78.64	33 to 91	33	-0.41	-50 to 15	-50
Grace/Love	80.32	61 to 95	78	78.41	41 to 93	41	-1.91	-37 to 11	-37
Repentant/Re sponsible	74.55	59 to 88	59	75.09	55 to 92	55	0.55	-8 to 8	-4
Leadership	83.36	55 to 96	76	84.09	38 to 98	38	0.73	-38 to 14	-38
and Doctrine									
Organized	82.82	57 to 100	79	83.55	33 to 97	33	0.73	-46 to 20	-46
Religion									
Experiencing	82.73	71 to 93	86	82.59	31 to 94	31	-0.14	-55 to 10	-55
Fellowship									
Ethical	74.00	56 to 91	76	73.14	49 to 87	49	-0.86	-27 to 17	-27
Affirming	74.09	53 to 94	79	74.55	37 to 90	37	0.45	-42 to 13	-42
Openness									
Church	3.91	2 to 5	5	4.05	1 to 5	5	0.14	-4 to 2	0
Activities									
Health	4.05	3 to 5	5	3.91	3 to 5	5	-0.14	-1 to 1	0
Description									
Physical	3.73	1 to 5	4	4.00	2 to 5	4	0.27	-1 to 4	0
Attentiveness									

Table 28
RSI Participant 15 Score Sheet

16

162710 DIVINA

Table 29
RSI Participant 16 Score Sheet

	Pre Mean Scores	Pre Range	Individual Pre Score	Post Mean Score	Post Range	Individual Post Score	Difference Score Means	Difference Range	Individual Difference Score
RSI Total	630.91	485 to 719	683	630.05	317 to 706	646	-0.86	-299 to 69	-17
Factor 1	109.18	76 to 171	89	111.23	80 to 263	106	2.05	-41 to 135	17
Factor 2	173.68	106 to 218	202	174.73	81 to 212	199	1.05	-96 to 38	-3
Factor 3	25.73	15 to 31	22	24.73	13 to 34	23	-1.00	-15 to 7	1
Factor 4	15.27	7 to 26	24	16.09	7 to 25	24	0.82	-8 to 9	0
Factor 5	16.09	10 to 24	14	16.36	10 to 24	14	0.27	-11 to 8	0
Factor 6	20.86	15.25	26	20.82	13 to 25	24	-0.05	-4 to 3	-1
Factor 7	189.77	116 to 240	216	191.09	92 to 236	213	1.32	-107 to 43	-3
Awareness of God	79.05	54 to 90	88	78.64	33 to 91	79	-0.41	-50 to 15	-9
Grace/Love	80.32	61 to 95	93	78.41	41 to 93	84	-1.91	-37 to 11	-9
Repentant/Re sponsible	74.55	59 to 88	71	75.09	55 to 92	77	0.55	-8 to 8	6
Leadership and Doctrine	83.36	55 to 96	93	84.09	38 to 98	92	0.73	-38 to 14	-1
Organized Religion	82.82	57 to 100	83	83.55	33 to 97	81	0.73	-46 to 20	-2
Experiencing Fellowship	82.73	71 to 93	89	82.59	31 to 94	85	-0.14	-55 to 10	-4
Ethical	74.00	56 to 91	71	73.14	49 to 87	71	-0.86	-27 to 17	0
Affirming Openness	74.09	53 to 94	76	74.55	37 to 90	77	0.45	-42 to 13	2
Church Activities	3.91	2 to 5	3	4.05	1 to 5	4	0.14	-4 to 2	1
Health Description	4.05	3 to 5	3	3.91	3 to 5	3	-0.14	-1 to 1	0
Physical Attentiveness	3.73	1 to 5	3	4.00	2 to 5	4	0.27	-1 to 4	1

17

LECTO DIVINA

	Pre Mean Scores	Pre Range	Individual Pre Score	Post Mean Score	Post Range	Individual Post Score	Difference Score Means	Difference Range	Individual Difference Score
RSI Total	630.91	485 to 719	719	630.05	317 to 705	701	-0.86	-299 to 69	-18
Factor 1	109.18	76 to 171	81	111.23	80 to 263	92	2.05	-41 to 135	11
Factor 2	173.68	106 to 218	218	174.73	81 to 212	210	1.05	-96 to 38	-8
Factor 3	25.73	15 to 31	27	24.73	13 to 34	23	-1.00	-15 to 7	-4
Factor 4	15.27	7 to 26	26	16.09	7 to 25	21	0.82	-8 to 9	-5
Factor 5	16.09	10 to 24	22	16.36	10 to 24	20	0.27	-11 to 8	-2
Factor 6	20.86	15 to 25	25	20.82	13 to 25	23	-0.05	-4 to 3	-2
Factor 7	189.77	116 to 240	240	191.09	92 to 236	230	1.32	-107 to 43	-10
Awareness of God	79.05	54 to 90	89	78.64	33 to 91	90	-0.41	-50 to 15	1
Grace/Love	80.32	61 to 95	93	78.41	41 to 93	93	-1.91	-37 to 11	0
Repentant/Responsible	74.55	59 to 88	88	75.09	55 to 92	81	0.55	-8 to 8	-7
Leadership and Doctrine	83.36	55 to 96	91	84.09	38 to 98	86	0.73	-38 to 14	-5
Organized Religion	82.82	57 to 100	100	83.55	33 to 97	97	0.73	-46 to 20	-3
Experiencing Fellowship	82.73	71 to 93	85	82.59	31 to 94	91	-0.14	-55 to 10	6
Ethical	74.00	56 to 91	79	73.14	49 to 87	73	-0.86	-27 to 17	-6
Affirming Openness	74.09	53 to 94	94	74.55	37 to 90	90	0.45	-42 to 13	-4
Church Activities	3.91	2 to 5	5	4.05	1 to 5	5	0.14	-4 to 2	0
Health	4.05	3 to 5	3	3.91	3 to 5	3	-0.14	-1 to 1	0
Physical Attentiveness	3.73	1 to 5	5	4.00	2 to 5	5	0.27	-1 to 4	0

Table 30
RSI Participant 17 Score Sheet

18

TRYING THE OFFICE

	Pre Mean Scores	Pre Range	Individual Pre Score	Post Mean Score	Post Range	Individual Post Score	Difference Score Means	Difference Range	Individual Difference Score
RSI Total	630.91	485 to 719	650	630.05	317 to 706	666	-0.86	-299 to 69	16
Factor 1	109.18	76 to 171	88	111.23	80 to 263	80	2.05	-41 to 135	-8
Factor 2	173.68	106 to 218	175	174.73	81 to 212	177	1.05	-96 to 38	2
Factor 3	25.73	15 to 31	22	24.73	13 to 34	25	-1.00	-15 to 7	3
Factor 4	15.27	7 to 26	10	16.09	7 to 25	11	0.82	-8 to 9	1
Factor 5	16.09	10 to 24	13	16.36	10 to 24	14	0.27	-11 to 8	1
Factor 6	20.86	15 to 25	17	20.82	13 to 25	18	-0.05	-4 to 3	1
Factor 7	189.77	116 to 240	188	191.09	92 to 236	191	1.32	-107 to 43	3
Awareness of God	79.05	54 to 90	89	78.64	33 to 91	88	-0.41	-50 to 15	-1
Grace/Love	80.32	61 to 95	85	78.41	41 to 93	84	-1.91	-37 to 11	-1
Repentant/Re sponsible	74.55	59 to 88	69	75.09	55 to 92	77	0.55	-8 to 8	8
Leadership and Doctrine	83.36	55 to 96	88	84.09	38 to 98	89	0.73	-38 to 14	1
Organized Religion	82.82	57 to 100	84	83.55	33 to 97	91	0.73	-46 to 20	7
Experiencing Fellowship	82.73	71 to 93	79	82.59	31 to 94	85	-0.14	-55 to 10	6
Ethical	74.00	56 to 91	74	73.14	49 to 87	75	-0.86	-27 to 17	1
Affirming Openness	74.09	53 to 94	82	74.55	37 to 90	77	0.45	-42 to 13	-5
Church Activities	3.91	2 to 5	4	4.05	1 to 5	3	0.14	-4 to 2	-1
Health Description	4.05	3 to 5	4	3.91	3 to 5	4	-0.14	-1 to 1	0
Physical Attentiveness	3.73	1 to 5	3	4.00	2 to 5	2	0.27	-1 to 4	-1

Table 31

RSI Participant 18 Score Sheet

RSI Participant 19 Score Sheet

Table 32

	Pre Mean Scores	Pre Range	Individual Pre Score	Post Mean Score	Post Range	Individual Post Score	Difference Score Means	Difference Range	Individual Difference Score
RSI Total	630.91	485 to 719	635	630.05	317 to 706	689	-0.86	-299 to 69	54
Factor 1	109.18	76 to 171	87	111.23	80 to 263	82	2.05	-41 to 135	-5
Factor 2	173.68	106 to 218	170	174.73	81 to 212	208	1.05	-96 to 38	38
Factor 3	25.73	15 to 31	26	24.73	13 to 34	22	-1.00	-15 to 7	-3
Factor 4	15.27	7 to 26	16	16.09	7 to 25	20	0.82	-8 to 9	6
Factor 5	16.09	10 to 24	14	16.36	10 to 24	18	0.27	-11 to 8	4
Factor 6	20.86	15.25	23	20.82	13 to 25	23	-0.05	-4 to 3	0
Factor 7	189.77	116 to 240	184	191.09	92 to 236	226	1.32	-107 to 43	42
Awareness of God	79.05	54 to 90	86	78.64	33 to 91	87	-0.41	-50 to 15	1
Grace/Love	80.32	61 to 95	79	78.41	41 to 93	88	-1.91	-37 to 11	9
Repentant/Re sponsible	74.55	59 to 88	69	75.09	55 to 92	68	0.55	-8 to 8	-1
Leadership and Doctrine	83.36	55 to 96	84	84.09	38 to 98	98	0.73	-38 to 14	14
Organized Religion	82.82	57 to 100	73	83.55	33 to 97	93	0.73	-46 to 20	20
Experiencing Fellowship	82.73	71 to 93	88	82.59	31 to 94	94	-0.14	-55 to 10	6
Ethical	74.00	56 to 91	72	73.14	49 to 87	73	-0.86	-27 to 17	1
Affirming Openness	74.09	53 to 94	84	74.55	37 to 90	88	0.45	-42 to 13	4
Church Activities	3.91	2 to 5	3	4.05	1 to 5	5	0.14	-4 to 2	2
Health Description	4.05	3 to 5	3	3.91	3 to 5	3	- 0.14	- 1 to 1	0
Physical Attentiveness	3.73	1 to 5	5	4.00	2 to 5	5	0.27	-1 to 4	0

20

PRAYING THE OFFICE

	Pre Mean Scores	Pre Range	Individual Pre Score	Post Mean Score	Post Range	Individual Post Score	Difference Score Means	Difference Range	Individual Difference Score
RSI Total	630.91	485 to 719	678	630.05	317 to 706	706	-0.86	-299 to 69	28
Factor 1	109.18	76 to 171	94	111.23	80 to 263	81	2.05	-41 to 135	-13
Factor 2	173.68	106 to 218	192	174.73	81 to 212	204	1.05	-96 to 38	12
Factor 3	25.73	15 to 31	27	24.73	13 to 34	34	-1.00	-15 to 7	7
Factor 4	15.27	7 to 26	21	16.09	7 to 25	17	0.82	-8 to 9	-4
Factor 5	16.09	10 to 24	21	16.36	10 to 24	20	0.27	-11 to 8	-1
Factor 6	20.86	15.25	20	20.82	13 to 25	22	-0.05	-4 to 3	2
Factor 7	189.77	116 to 240	213	191.09	92 to 236	224	1.32	-107 to 43	11
Awareness of God	79.05	54 to 90	90	78.64	33 to 91	91	-0.41	-50 to 15	1
Grace/Love	80.32	61 to 95	84	78.41	41 to 93	86	-1.91	-37 to 11	2
Repentant/Re sponsible	74.55	59 to 88	81	75.09	55 to 92	81	0.55	-8 to 8	0
Leadership and Doctrine	83.36	55 to 96	87	84.09	38 to 98	98	0.73	-38 to 14	11
Organized Religion	82.82	57 to 100	84	83.55	33 to 97	96	0.73	-46 to 20	12
Experiencing Fellowship	82.73	71 to 93	93	82.59	31 to 94	85	-0.14	-55 to 10	-8
Ethical	74.00	56 to 91	81	73.14	49 to 87	87	-0.86	-27 to 17	6
Affirming Openness	74.09	53 to 94	78	74.55	37 to 90	82	0.45	-42 to 13	4
Church Activities	3.91	2 to 5	5	4.05	1 to 5	5	0.14	-4 to 2	0
Health Description	4.05	3 to 5	4	3.91	3 to 5	4	-0.14	-1 to 1	0
Physical Attentiveness	3.73	1 to 5	3	4.00	2 to 5	3	0.27	-1 to 4	0

Table 33
RSI Participant 20 Score Sheet

GUIDED IMAGERY

21

	Pre Mean Scores	Pre Range	Individual Pre Score	Post Mean Score	Post Range	Individual Post Score	Difference Score Means	Difference Range	Individual Difference Score
RSI Total	630.91	485 to 719	660	630.05	317 to 706	667	-0.86	-299 to 69	7
Factor 1	109.18	76 to 171	89	111.23	80 to 263	86	2.05	-41 to 135	-3
Factor 2	173.68	106 to 218	187	174.73	81 to 212	193	1.05	-96 to 38	6
Factor 3	25.73	15 to 31	16	24.73	13 to 34	18	-1.00	-15 to 7	2
Factor 4	15.27	7 to 26	13	16.09	7 to 25	12	0.82	-8 to 9	-1
Factor 5	16.09	10 to 24	19	16.36	10 to 24	19	0.27	-11 to 8	0
Factor 6	20.86	15 to 25	22	20.82	13 to 25	22	-0.05	-4 to 3	0
Factor 7	169.77	116 to 240	206	181.09	92 to 236	212	1.32	-107 to 43	6
Awareness of God	79.05	54 to 90	86	78.64	33 to 91	88	-0.41	-50 to 15	3
Grace/Love	80.32	61 to 95	87	78.41	41 to 93	90	-1.91	-37 to 11	3
Repentant/Responsible	74.55	59 to 88	81	75.09	55 to 92	81	0.55	-8 to 8	0
Leadership and Doctrine	83.36	55 to 96	93	84.09	38 to 98	95	0.73	-38 to 14	2
Organized Religion	82.82	57 to 100	95	83.55	33 to 97	96	0.73	-46 to 20	1
Experiencing Fellowship	82.73	71 to 83	72	82.59	31 to 94	72	-0.14	-55 to 10	0
Ethical	74.00	56 to 91	73	73.14	49 to 87	72	-0.86	-27 to 17	-1
Affirming Openness	74.09	53 to 84	74	74.55	37 to 90	73	0.45	-42 to 13	-1
Church Activities	3.91	2 to 5	5	4.05	1 to 5	1	0.14	-4 to 2	-4
Health	4.05	3 to 5	5	3.91	3 to 5	5	-0.14	-1 to 1	0
Physical Attentiveness	3.73	1 to 5	5	4.00	2 to 5	5	0.27	-1 to 4	0

Table 34

RSI Participant 21 Score Sheet

GUIDED INTERVIEW

22

	Pre Mean Scores	Pre Range	Individual Pre Score	Post Mean Score	Post Range	Individual Post Score	Difference Score Means	Difference Range	Individual Difference Score
RSI Total	630.91	485 to 719	607	630.05	317 to 706	610	-0.86	-299 to 69	3
Factor 1	109.18	76 to 171	101	111.23	80 to 263	112	2.05	-41 to 135	11
Factor 2	173.68	106 to 218	189	174.73	81 to 212	162	1.05	-96 to 38	3
Factor 3	25.73	15 to 31	20	24.73	13 to 34	24	-1.00	-15 to 7	4
Factor 4	15.27	7 to 26	12	16.09	7 to 25	14	0.82	-8 to 9	2
Factor 5	16.09	10 to 24	11	16.36	10 to 24	12	0.27	-11 to 8	4
Factor 6	20.86	15.25	16	20.82	13 to 25	17	-0.05	-4 to 3	2
Factor 7	189.77	116 to 240	170	191.09	92 to 236	174	1.32	-107 to 43	4
Awareness of God	79.05	54 to 90	87	78.64	33 to 91	84	-0.41	-50 to 15	-3
Grace/Love	80.32	61 to 95	80	78.41	41 to 93	84	-1.91	-37 to 11	4
Repentant/Responsible	74.55	59 to 88	69	75.09	55 to 92	75	0.55	-8 to 8	6
Leadership and Doctrine	83.36	55 to 96	78	84.09	38 to 98	78	0.73	-38 to 14	0
Organized Religion	82.82	57 to 100	76	83.55	33 to 97	72	0.73	-46 to 20	-4
Experiencing Fellowship	82.73	71 to 93	82	82.59	31 to 94	84	-0.14	-55 to 10	2
Ethical	74.00	56 to 91	65	73.14	49 to 87	61	-0.86	-27 to 17	-4
Affirming	74.09	53 to 84	70	74.55	37 to 90	72	0.45	-42 to 13	2
Openness	3.91	2 to 5	2	4.05	1 to 5	3	0.14	-4 to 2	-1
Church Activities	4.05	3 to 5	4	3.91	3 to 5	4	-0.14	-1 to 1	0
Health Description	3.73	1 to 5	4	4.00	2 to 5	4	0.27	-1 to 4	0
Physical Attentiveness									

Table 35

RSI Participant 22 Score Sheet

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books

- Bacik, James J. *Spirituality in Action*. Kansas City, Mo.: Sheed and Ward, 1997.
- Berrigan Daniel. *Ten Commandments for the Long Haul*. Nashville: Abingdon, Press, 1981.
- The Bible. New Revised Standard Version.
- Carmody, John. *Holistic Spirituality*. New York: Paulist Press, 1983.
- Casteel, John L. "Introduction: The Rise of Personal Groups." In *Spiritual Renewal Through Personal Groups*. Ed. John L. Casteel. New York: Association Press, 1957.
- Chittister, Joan D. *Wisdom Distilled from the Daily: Living the Rule of St. Benedict Today*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1990.
- Culley, Iris V. *Education for Spiritual Growth*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1984.
- Deshler, G. Byron. *The Power of Personal Groups*. Nashville: Tidings, 1960.
- Festinger, Leon, and Elliot Aaronson. "Aurosal and Reduction of Dissonance in Social Contexts." In *Group Dynamics: Research and Theory*. 3rd ed. Eds. Dorwin Cartwright and Alvin Zander. New York: Harper & Row, 1968.
- Frank, Thomas Edward. *Polity, Practice, and the Mission of The United Methodist Church*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997.
- Freire, Paulo. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Trans. by Myra Bergman Ramos. 20th Anniversary ed. New York: Continuum, 1993.
- Gratton, Carolyn. *The Art of Spiritual Guidance: A Contemporary Approach to Growing in the Spirit*. New York: Crossroad Publishing, 1992.
- Hall, Thelma. *Too Deep for Words: Rediscovering Lectio Divina, with 500 Scripture Texts for Prayer*. New York: Paulist Press, 1988.

- Hauser, Richard J. "Each Mortal Thing Does One Thing and the Same -- Selves: An Approach to Christian Discernment." In *Handbook of Spirituality for Ministers*. Ed. Robert J. Wicks. New York: Paulist Press, 1995.
- Helminiak, Daniel A. *Spiritual Development: An Interdisciplinary Study*. Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1987.
- Hopkins, Gerard Manley. "Kingfishers." In *A Hopkins Reader*. Ed. John Pick. Garden City, N.Y.: Image Books, 1966.
- Hunter, D. R. "Group Dynamics." In *Encyclopedia of Religious Education*. Eds. Iris C. Culley and Kendig Brubaker Culley. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1990.
- Icenogle, Gareth Weldon. *Biblical Foundations for Small Group Ministry: An Integrational Approach*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1994.
- Johnson, David W., and Frank P. Johnson. *Joining Together: Group Theory and Group Skills*. 5th ed. Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 1994.
- Johnson, Susanne. *Christian Spiritual Formation in the Church and Classroom*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1989.
- Keene, Gary M. *Guidelines for Leading Your Congregation: Organizing the Work of Your Church*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996.
- Kirkpatrick, Thomas G. *Small Groups in the Church: A Handbook for Creating Community*. [Bethesda, Md.]: Alban Institute, 1995.
- Malony, H. Newton. "Assessing Religious Maturity." In *Psychotherapy and the Religiously Committed Patient*. Ed. E. Mark Stern. New York: Hayworth Press, 1985.
- May, Gerald G. *Care of Mind, Care of Spirit: A Psychiatrist Explores Spiritual Direction*. San Francisco: HarpersSanFrancisco, 1992.
- Meeks, Wayne A. *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983.
- Naparstek, Belleruth. *Staying Well with Guided Imagery*. New York: Warner Books, 1994.
- Norwood, Frederick A. *The Story of American Methodism: A History of United Methodists and Their Relations*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1974.

- O'Donnell, Gabriel. "Praying the Office: Time Stolen for God." In *Spiritual Traditions for the Contemporary Church*. Eds. Robin Maas and Gabriel O'Donnell. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1990.
- Outler, Albert C., ed. *John Wesley*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1964.
- Pennington, M. Basil. *Lectio Divina: Renewing the Ancient Practice of Praying the Scriptures*. New York: Crossroad Publishing, 1998.
- Roguet, A. M. *The Liturgy of the Hours: The General Instructions on the Liturgy of the Hours*. Trans. Peter Coughlan and Peter Purdue. London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1971.
- Rossman, Martin L. *Healing Yourself*. New York: Pocket Books, 1989.
- Shepherd, Massey Hamilton, Jr. *The Oxford American Prayer Book Commentary*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1950.
- Stahl, Carolyn. *Opening to God: Guided Imagery Meditation on Scripture*. Nashville: Upper Room, 1977.
- Stanger, Frank Bateman. *Spiritual Formation in the Local Church*. Grand Rapids: Francis Asbury Press, 1989.
- Stewart, Columba. *Prayer and Community: The Benedictine Tradition*. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1998.
- Taft, Robert. *The Liturgy of the Hours in East and West: The Origins of the Divine Office and Its Meaning for Today*. Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1986.
- Tillich, Paul. *Systematic Theology: Three Volumes in One*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967.
- United Methodist Church (U.S.). *The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church*. Nashville: United Methodist Publishing House, 1996.
- . *The United Methodist Book of Worship*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1992.
- . *The United Methodist Hymnal*. Nashville: United Methodist Publishing House, 1989.
- Vest, Norvene. *Gathered in the Word: Praying the Scripture in Small Groups*. Nashville: Upper Room Books, 1996.

- Watson, David Lowes. *Class Leaders: Recovering a Tradition*. Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 1991.
- . *Covenant Discipleship: Christian Formation through Mutual Accountability*. Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 1991.
- . *The Early Methodist Class Meeting: Its Origins and Significance*. Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 1985.
- . *Forming Christian Disciples: The Role of Covenant Discipleship and Class Leaders in the Congregation*. Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 1991.
- Wesley, John. *John Wesley's Theology: A Collection from His Works*. Eds. Robert W. Burtner and Robert E. Chiles. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1982.
- Wickett, R. E. Y. *Models of Adult Religious Education Practice*. Birmingham, Ala.: Religious Education Press, 1991.
- Wilke, Richard B. *And Are We Yet Alive?: The Future of the United Methodist Church*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1986.
- Willimon, William H., and Robert L. Wilson. *Rekindling the Flame: Strategies for a Vital United Methodism*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1987.
- Wuthnow, Robert. *"I Come Away Stronger": How Small Groups Are Shaping American Religion*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1994.
- . *Sharing the Journey: Support Groups and America's New Quest for Community*. New York: Free Press, 1994.

Dissertations and Projects

- Chrisley, Hillary Andrea. *The Wesleyan Class Meeting: A Guide on the Quest for Perfection*. D.Min. project, Claremont School of Theology, 1989. Ann Arbor: UMI, 1989. 89-24274.
- Juckniess, Lyn. "Spiritual Growth through Guided Autobiography Groups in Beginning Experience Team Members." D.Min. project, Claremont School of Theology, 1996.
- Lee, Nam Ok. *Wesleyan Class Meeting: Its Relationship to Church Renewal and Growth*. D.Min. project, Claremont School of Theology, 1989. Ann Arbor: UMI 1989. 89-24378.

Rogers, Frank Jr. *Karl Barth's Faith Epistemology of the Spirit as a Critical and Constructive Framework for Christian Education*. Ph.D. diss., Princeton Theological Seminary, 1991. Ann Arbor: UMI, 1991. 91-27018.

Periodicals

Alter, Margaret G. "An Empirical Study of Christian Religious Maturity: Its Implications for Parish Ministry." *Pastoral Psychology* 37, no. 3 (Spring 1989): 153-60.

---. "Phenomenology of Christian Religious Maturity." *Pastoral Psychology* 34, no. 3 (Spring 1986): 151-59.

Banks, Robert J. "Spiritual Formation in Seminary," *Catalyst* 19, no. 1 (Nov. 1992): 1, 7-8.

Benson, Peter L., Michael J. Donahue, and Joseph A. Erickson. "The Faith Maturity Scale: Conceptualization, Measurement, and Empirical Validation." *Research in the Social Scientific Study of Religion* 5 (1993): 1-26.

Davies, James A. "Small Groups: Are They Really So New?" *Christian Education Journal* 5, no. 2 (1984): 43-52.

Ellison, Craig W. "Spiritual Well-being: Conceptualization and Measurement." *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 11 (Winter 1983): 330-40.

Ellison, Craig W., and Joel Smith. "Toward an Integrative Measure of Health and Well-Being." *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 19, no. 1 (1991): 35-48.

LaPierre, Lawrence L. "A Model for Describing Spirituality (Six Factors of Spiritual Experience)." *Journal of Religion and Health* 33, no. 2 (Summer 1994): 153-61.

Malony, H. Newton. "The Clinical Assessment of Optimal Religious Functioning." *Review of Religious Research* 30, no.1 (Sept. 1988): 3-17.

---. "Making a Religious Diagnosis: The Use of Religious Assessment in Pastoral Care and Counseling." *Pastoral Psychology* 41, no. 4 (1993): 237-46.

Schneider, A. Gregory. Review of *The Early Methodist Class Meeting: Its Origin and Significance*, by David Lowes Watson. *Church History* 56, no. 1 (Mar. 1987): 137-38.